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# THE INDYPENDENT

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## NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

**E-mail**  
imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org

**Web**  
independent.org  
NYC: nyc.indymedia.org  
U.S.: us.indymedia.org  
GLOBAL: indymedia.org

**Mail**  
P.O. Box 1417  
NY, NY 10276

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### VOLUNTEER STAFF:

Chris Anderson, Kazembe Balagun, Charlie Bass, Bennett Baumer, Betty Benitez, Jed Brandt, Mike Burke, Alex Campbell, Jessie Carpenter, Antrim Caskey, Susan Chenelle, Orly Clergé, Ellen Davidson, Ryan Dunsmuir, Sierra Freeman, Karen Fu, Neela Ghoshal, Lauren Giambrone, Antonio Golan, A.K. Gupta, Irina Ivanova, Ruth Kelton, Ula Kuras, Jessica Lee, F. Timothy Martin, Gary Martin, Diane Mason, Edgar Mata, Yoni Mishal, Nik Moore, Ana Nogueira, Donald Paneth, Nicholas Powers, Mauricio Quintero, Frank Reynoso, Gabriel Riocabo, Ann Schneider, Andrew Stern, John Tarleton, Xavier Tayo, Erin Thompson, Liz Tillotson, Matthew Wasserman, Steven Wishnia, Amy Wolf and Jen Yuson

## election analysis

# Brooklyn Politics: THE CHANGING SAME

BY KAZEMBE BALAGUN

In a race marked by racial tensions and the declining fortune of the Brooklyn Democratic machine, Yvette Clarke squeaked out a Democratic primary victory in central Brooklyn's 11th Congressional district on Sept. 12. Clarke came in with 31 percent of the vote, just ahead of insurgent candidate David Yassky's 26 percent.

Clarke is daughter of former political scion Una Clarke, and has, at best, a lackluster record in her five-year tenure on the city council. Much to the chagrin of her constituents, she also supports the Atlantic Yards development project. But her victory was met by a collective sigh of relief for much of the district's Black and Caribbean community.

Her opponent, Yassky, was no ordinary candidate: He's white and Jewish, two signifiers that carry meaning in central Brooklyn, a community where many still bear the scars of the Crown Heights riots in 1991. Created as a result of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the 11th elected Shirley Chisholm as the first Caribbean woman to Congress. Chisholm used the seat for the benefit of her community, while creating a broad political base that eventually led her to run for president in 1972.

In contrast, Yassky is a political centrist who was backed by the city real estate com-

panies (he also supports the Atlantic Yards project). He hoped to take advantage of the influx of white young urban professionals who are now forming a cultural and political bloc in central Brooklyn.

He moved three blocks into the 11th, with hopes of sailing to Washington on white support and a divided Black vote. Two other African-American candidates, State Senator Carl Andrews and Chris Owens, son of the district's retiring Congressman Major Owens, were also running in the primary.

Many in the Black community denounced Yassky's run as pure opportunism. During Yassky's campaign swing through the Wyckoff Gardens housing development, a chocolate donut was hurled at his contingent. Ironically, a police officer serving security detail caught the fructose-glazed missile. No one was hurt, including Mayor Bloomberg who accompanied Yassky to tout new security measures at the projects.

"They wouldn't let a Black candidate run in a white community," one Wyckoff resident commented on Yassky's campaign.

Still, a bigger question loomed in this election: the question of political power, particularly in African and Caribbean communities. When Brooklyn Democratic head Clarence Norman, one of the most powerful men in

the New York State assembly, was convicted on embezzlement charges, it represented the overall weakening of the Black political center in New York City.

Term limits for city councilmembers have led to a feeding frenzy in which traditionally staid politicians are drooling at the chance to gain a position of some stability. In Brooklyn that means the continuation of a legacy system that looks like a scene from *The Godfather*. Various families, such as the Boylands out of East New York, the Clarkes and the Owens, fight for turf. With the impending retirement of the old guard (Major Owens and possibly Charles Rangel if the Democrats don't win the House), the primary in the 11th signals a tremendous power shift among local Democratic politicians.

Fear of losing this traditional Black district provided the impetus for political unity. For the first time in many years, a Black Brooklyn Empowerment Convention was called. Among the many topics were education, housing and police brutality. Still, the major draw was how to defeat Yassky and maintain the gains of civil rights in the district. Al Sharpton attempted to broker a deal where one of the candidates would drop out, but none agreed.

Progressives feared that the Brooklyn machine was only concerned with defeating the Yassky threat without fielding progressive candidates all around. A clear example of this was the lack of support behind Chris Owens. Owens ran on a strong antiwar campaign and is a vocal opponent of gentrification. In addition, Owens was the candidate of choice for many white progressives, which would have made him an attractive candidate. Yet Owens was a bit too independent for the Brooklyn machine, as indicated by his attempts to win the Green Party ballot.

One would hope that this election would become the staging ground for a broader unity of Black activists ranging from moderates to radicals in order to work on issues like schools, health care and ever-increasing gentrification. Yet Clarke's victory leaves one feeling that the Brooklyn machine is more than happy with the status quo. Without a real opponent in the general election in November, Clarke is sure to become the next congresswoman in the district. It seems that the community may have won the battle, but lost the war.



David Yassky hoped to take advantage of the influx of white young urban professionals who are now forming a cultural and political bloc in central Brooklyn. PHOTO: AP

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR



### AK GUPTA SMEARS ISRAEL

There is a difference between criticizing Israeli policies (and U.S. financial backing of Israel) and delegitimizing it as a rightful member of the community of nations. In "A Brief History of Zionism" (Aug. 10), A.K. Gupta raises some important criticism of all "settler states" that have displaced the local population in their creation. However, no one in the United Nations refuses to accept the United States' legitimacy as a nation despite its genocidal treatment of its indigenous population. Nor are boycotts waged against Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, or other countries, that either exterminated their indigenous inhabitants or displaced them. Is it because these genocidal activities happened long ago that these countries have more legitimacy than Israel? Or is it because Gupta feels that Jews aren't a "real" people deserving of a state?

If Israel is merely a product of European colonialism, then the states of Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, etc. carved up during the same period should not be recognized as legitimate either. Gupta finds no fault with the invasion of Israel immediately after its creation by the United Nations in 1948. It seems that any Israel, no matter how small, would have been

too big an encroachment on the vast Arab world.

To attack Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people (and not only from Europe), in such a way that Israel has any less legitimacy than any other country to exist betrays a prejudice that the planet's only Jewish and Hebrew-speaking state has no right to exist among the nations of the world. This is indeed an anti-Semitic perspective and I am disappointed that the editors of Indymedia have allowed such an analysis to be expressed within its pages as fact.

—MICHAEL KASSNER

### A.K. Gupta Replies

In debating heated topics such as Zionism it's hard for opposing sides to find agreement, which is why I commend Mr. Kassner. He is willing to admit upfront that Israel is a settler state, with all the history of "genocidal activities," as he puts it, that it entails.

Curiously, Mr. Kassner's concludes the article, "A Brief History of Zionism," delegitimizes the Israeli state. I made no comment as to the validity of Israel because what I believe is irrelevant. While I can actively oppose the actions of the Israeli state, as the country that most benefits from U.S. economic, political, diplomatic

*continued on page 15*



Councilmember Dan Garodnick wants Met Life to consider a tenant bid to buy the sprawling complex. PHOTO: BENNETT BAUMER

BY BENNETT BAUMER

Real-estate moguls salivated and pundits pondered how hot the housing market could get when the Met Life insurance company announced Stuyvesant Town-Peter Cooper Village – the apartment complexes stretching from 14th to 23rd streets and First Avenue to Avenue C in Manhattan – was on the block.

The asking price is an astronomical \$5 billion, and the 25,000 tenants wonder if any buyer would quickly deregulate rent-stabilized apartments to maximize profit. In the uncertain climate, the majority middle-class renters are banding together and talking about buying the housing complex with a mix of their own money and governmental funds.

“We are better off with our destiny in our own hands,” says Al Doyle, president of the Stuyvesant Town-Peter Cooper Village Tenant Association. He is a second-generation Stuyvesant Town resident.

City Councilmember Daniel Garodnick, along with other elected officials, is floating the idea that private and public pension funds, governmental funds and “socially conscious private-sector investors” could help the tenants buy their apartments. However, Met Life has communicated to governmental officials and tenants that they would not entertain a tenant-led bid.

“Stuyvesant Town was built with every subsidy known to man,” Garodnick said. “Yet, Met Life will not consider a tenant bid even if it has the highest bid.”

Purchase by a tenant-led group of investors seems unlikely given the enormous price tag, even if Stuyvesant Town-Peter Cooper Village residents are better off than most city renters. “Anything is a possible – realistic is subjective,” says Doyle.

Though tenants are anxious about a possible sale to a large corporation, any buyer’s business plan will surely be the same as Met Life’s. The insurance company has been aggressively turning rent-stabilized apartments to market-rate rentals through vacancy increases and remodeling work. Landlords receive a 20 percent increase in a rent-stabilized apartment every time someone moves out, and they can add 1/40 of the cost of remodeling work to the monthly rent as well. Once an apartment reaches the \$2,000 decontrol threshold, it becomes deregulated and the landlord can charge as much as the market will bear. Also, market-rate tenants do not enjoy the same protections as rent-regulated tenants; they don’t have an automatic right to renew their leases, for example.

Met Life advertises the market-rate apartments as “luxury” and charges thousands of dollars for them—not bad for a complex that many tenants referred to as “projects.”

“Stuy Town set the mold for urban redevelopment. The government gave a huge gift to Met Life, condemning the land and turning it over to Met Life with large-scale displacement of poor people,” said tenant historian Roberta Gold.

In order to build the complex in the late 1940s, Met Life teamed with city development czar Robert Moses to draft language in a bill to allow insurance companies, which were

# MET LIFE TO STUY TENANTS: Middle class my ass!

then barred from owning housing, to develop limited-dividend housing. The next hurdle was the 11,000 people huddled in tenements in the old gas house district. Using slum-clearance laws (which were first backed by progressives), Met Life cleared an entire neighborhood to build homes for the middle class ready to move on after World War II. But there was one catch.

Met Life maintained a whites only policy at Stuyvesant Town, excluding African-Americans from living at the complex.

Early tenant advocates and Communist Party members formed the Tenant Committee to End Discrimination at Stuyvesant Town and challenged Met Life’s discrimination policies by having African-American families stay in their apartments while they were away on vacation or work.

“The Hendrix family came to live one summer at the apartment of Jesse Kessler, and that established a black presence,” says former Stuyvesant Town resident Lee Lorch.

The Hendrix family later moved into Lorch’s apartment and Met Life responded by red-baiting the tenant committee. Lorch lost successive teaching jobs at City College and Penn State because of his early integration activism, and other tenant activists faced eviction.

“They barricaded themselves in the day of the eviction notices,” said Rosel Lehman, a Stuyvesant Town resident since 1948.

Lehman’s late husband, Franz, and other tenants took turns sleeping over at apartments with black families for protection. Like many white tenants advocating for integration, both Rosel and Franz Lehman identified with their African-American neighbors through their leftist leanings and experience as Jews during the rise of the Nazis. Both Lehmans fled Germany in the mid-1930s.

The NAACP, led by future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, lost court cases to integrate the complex, but the tenant committee had success stopping evictions, and in 1950, forced Met Life to drop its segregation policy and give the Hendrixes and other black families leases. In 1951, the City Council passed a law barring racial discrimination in any publicly assisted housing. However, integration moved at a snail’s pace for decades, and today those first families and other middle-class residents may face a similar fate as the gas-house district’s tenants.

“They cleared the area of the poor and put in the middle class, now they’ll take out the middle-class and put in the rich,” says Lorch.

Rent-regulated tenants at Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village will still be protected even if a new owner buys the complex, but the dismantling of affordable housing continues one apartment at a time.

“Best-case scenario? I want to stay in my apartment and continue to pay rent stabilized rent,” says Soni Fink, a tenant association board member and 45-year resident of the complex.

*Bennett Baumer is a tenant organizer. Visit [metcouncil.net](http://metcouncil.net) for more info.*



Marie Runyon, 91, a member of the Granny Brigade for Peace, marches against the war. PHOTO: MAURICIO QUINTERO

## Feet Forward

BY ERIN THOMPSON

Just days after United For Peace and Justice (UFPJ) issued a startling declaration that they would protest President Bush’s speech to the United Nations, “permit or no permit,” more than 1,000 antiwar protesters made their way to the UN on the morning of Sept. 19.

“We got to get a message to that son of a bitch! We are serious about this! No more killing!” said Marie Runyon, 91. The silver-haired, longtime activist and former Assemblywoman is now a member of the Granny Brigade for Peace. Last fall, she was one of 18 “peace grannies” arrested when they tried to enter the Times Square recruiting station.

“I stopped counting after 28 arrests...” said the partially-blind Runyon, who has been arrested for everything from protesting the Vietnam War to tenant evictions to the Diallo shooting.

Runyon’s friend Charles Rainford, a spry 81-year-old, was walking alongside her. “I think we all need to protest...[Bush] is the worse thing to happen to this country in 200 years.”

Although 16 antiwar activists were arrested in a separate action in front of the UN at 44th and 1st Ave., the UFPJ march characterized a day of protest that was a far cry from the wholesale civil disobedience threatened earlier in the week. Officially permitted by the NYPD at the last minute, much of the march happened in the far left lane of traffic-clogged Midtown streets before ending in a rally behind barricades at Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza.

As an alternative to what 20-year-old Pratt student, Dan Mirisola, called the “tired and old” antiwar movement, members of the newly-reconstituted Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), also embarked upon their own, unpermitted protest that day.

“We don’t believe we need a permit to march,” said John Cronan, a senior at Pace University and co-founder of the new SDS chapter at his college. Taking its name from the legendary 1960s student antiwar movement (see p. 5), the new SDS has 163 chapters nationwide. Launched in January, the new SDS represents the hope by students that they can resurrect the power of the 1960s student movement.

Keeping with the ethos of SDS, which Cronan described as “standing up to unwanted authority” the group marched in a winding and sporadic sidewalk parade that began at 42nd and Fifth Ave and ended at Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza. Arriving an hour before the larger, permitted UFPJ antiwar march was schedule to arrive, the crowd of 50 protesters, many freshman at their first antiwar protest, faced what looked like a large, empty cage.

Police officers waited at either side of 47th street, signaling that the students would either have to keep moving or enter the gleaming, silver barricades. The crowd stalled, trying to decide between marching or being penned.

Not knowing what else to do, they decided to march to Grand Central. Frequently barricaded and prevented from following any direct route to the UN the students came face-to-face with the limitations of democracy in a city adept at diverting, dispersing and caging political expression.

“I’ve actually never turned around so many times at a march,” said Davey Vacek, a 20-year-old junior from Pratt Institute.

That the protest eventually joined the larger, more subdued UFPJ rally and ended within the safety of the barricades only heightened some marchers sense of frustration.

“We want out of the pens and into the streets,” said Mirisola, who was a founding member of Pratt’s SDS chapter. “We don’t want to be pushed around.”

*(John Tarleton contributed to this report. For the full version, see [independent.org](http://independent.org).)*

# Silence of the Netroots

## Liberal Blogosphere Leaves Tasini Twisting



When anti-war candidate Jonathan Tasini soundly lost his Sept. 12 primary bid to unseat Democratic Senator Hillary Clinton – and yet still managed to double his expected percentage of the vote with 17 percent – most of the liberal blogosphere reacted with a giant yawn.

Why the difference between the chilly reception afforded Tasini as opposed to the rapturous embrace of Ned Lamont, the millionaire cable TV executive who recently toppled Sen. Joe Lieberman in Connecticut’s Democratic primary? A number of explanations have been offered – Clinton is (slightly) more liberal than Lieberman, Tasini ran a poor campaign, Tasini was vastly underfunded compared to Lamont, the vote isn’t just about the war. But in the end, there can be little doubt that Tasini was seen early on by much of the “netroots” – the leading lefty blogs (*Daily Kos*, *MyDD*, *Eschaton*, the *Huffington Post*) that dominate the liberal wing of the internet – as a “loser.”

BY CHRIS ANDERSON

Perhaps the defining characteristic of the most powerful liberal political blogs is their pragmatism, their passion to win. The absence of such a killer instinct among segments of the American left has long been a source of frustration for many progressives; as ex-60’s radical turned Democratic Party activist Todd Gitlin wrote in the summer of 2001:

“The right also tends to win in the great game of organization – and in a mass democracy, that means the great game of politics.

Our side likes to have fun... the left will not beat them until it is just as serious – yes, just as fanatical – about winning.”

For pragmatic progressives like Gitlin, then, there seems to be a new reason to hope. The netroots “crashing of Washington’s gates wasn’t about ideology, it was about pragmatism,” wrote *Daily Kos* founder Markos Moulitsas in *The Washington Post* in the summer of 2006. Closer to home, and even more bluntly, *Daily Gotham* contributor Michael Bouldin had this to say about his vision of politics: “I believe strongly that politics is not about “taking a stand” or “expressing

feelings” or other such therapeutic drivel; it is about winning.”

Some longtime progressive activists fear, however, that the realism of much of the liberal netroots may be sacrificing a long-term vision in the name of a short-term electoral strategy.

It was Tasini’s candidacy, as much as anything else, that demonstrates both the playing-to-win mentality of much of the liberal blogosphere and the potential cost exacted by this pragmatic outlook. Most lefty blogs, with the exception of the *Huffington Post*, either ignored Tasini entirely or systematically denigrated his candidacy, especially in comparison for the near-holy crusade that became the Lamont (or rather, the anti-Lieberman) campaign.

Despite the numerous “member diaries” written about Tasini in the past few months on the *Daily Kos*, there was no “featured” diary about the Democratic candidate for the month leading up to the primary. Atrios of the *Eschaton* blog ignored Tasini entirely. *MyDD*, one of the prime movers and shakers behind the Lamont campaign, had this to say about Tasini: “I had interest in Tasini early on, but I did some research and concluded that Tasini didn’t have the infrastructure ready to seriously challenge Senator Clinton. I didn’t blog about Tasini.” And *MoveOn.org*, perhaps the leading internet-based organization representing the so-called “liberal

wing” of the Democratic Party, resisted months of pressure from their members before they held a last-minute members primary pitting Tasini versus Clinton (no candidate ended up winning enough votes to secure a MoveOn endorsement).

### The New Democratic Party Elites

The internet has become the driving new force in Democratic Party politics and a handful of key sites have come to have disproportionate clout because of the tendency of web traffic to cluster around “first adopters,” i.e. sites that have established themselves early on in the emergence of a new internet-based niche markets.

These sites, which emphasize pragmatic, election-focused, win-at-any-cost politics of the *Daily Kos* and related blogs like *MyDD*, exploded in popularity during the run-up to the Iraq War, powered by a potent combination of savvy anti-war rhetoric, advanced interactive technologies, and their position as one of the few online websites that simultaneously spoke to mainstream Democrats and affected a semi-radical edge (Makos Moulitsas is famous for his blunt dismissal of the murder of four American contractors in the Iraqi city of Falluja in 2004, a comment he would certainly never make today: “They are there to wage war for profit. Screw them.”)

When the dust settled in the aftermath of John Kerry’s loss to George W. Bush in the 2004 election, the election-minded netroots was poised to seize the mantle of the Democratic Party. “They want to make me into the latest Jesse Jackson, but I’m not ideological at all,” Moulitsas told the *Washington Monthly* in January 2006. “I’m just all about winning.”

The key for the future of netroots-based politics will come if and when the Democratic Party finally ends its losing ways and returns to political power – possibly as early as this coming November. Will the liberal activists of the internet remain harsh but loyal critics once their party grabs hold of levers of government? Or, as seems more likely, will they repeat the mistakes of the Clinton era and simply be thankful to have temporarily arrested the Democrats’ slow but steady decline?

For more writing by Chris Anderson, check: [indypendent.typepad.com/academese](http://indypendent.typepad.com/academese)



## The Barron of Brooklyn Goes Down to the Machine

Radical city councilperson Charles Barron narrowly lost to 12-term incumbent Edolphus Towns in a hotly contested Democratic primary in New York’s 10th Congressional District. Barron, a former Black Panther, quickly vowed to run again in 2008.

“I ran a very impressive campaign and had almost 200 people who worked for free,” Barron told the Canarsie Digest. “We have launched a movement now. We showed that money isn’t everything.”

Barron has been a fierce critic of the Iraq War and U.S. intervention in

Venezuela, Haiti and Palestine. He has also called on the government to pay reparations for slavery.

Unofficial results gave Towns 47 percent of the vote to Barron’s 38 percent. Assemblymember Roger Green received 15 percent of the vote. The 10th Congressional District sprawls across Brooklyn and includes East New York, Canarsie, Brownsville, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Cypress Hills, Clinton Hill, Mill Basin, Midwood, and parts of Downtown Brooklyn, Boreum Hill, Fort Greene and Williamsburg.

— Hudson Rivera



**ABOVE:** Washington State students blockade a Stryker deployment through the Port of Olympia, Washington in May. Dozens were arrested in the first major direct action to resist a military deployment to Iraq. SDS members from Evergreen College and Tacoma played a leading role.

PHOTO: KID CITIZEN

—JED BRANDT

## SDS TIMELINE

**June, 1962** – Port Huron Statement  
Fewer than 100 people attend the first SDS convention at Port Huron, Michigan and adopt the Port Huron Statement. The power of the Port Huron Statement lies in the ideal of participatory democracy, in which people take part in making decisions that affect their lives.

Most early SDS activity was oriented toward civil rights in the South, where the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) played a key role in inspiring SDS, both philosophically and by example.

**April 17, 1965** – First National March Against the Vietnam War in Washington, D.C.  
SDS assembles over 20,000 against the Vietnam War and begins its meteoric growth. Refusing to exclude communist sympathizers or members, SDS breaks with its “parent” organization, the League for Industrial Democracy.

**April 4, 1968** – Martin Luther King assassinated. Over 100 cities erupt in rebellion. Revolution is in the air.

**From April 23-27, 1968** — Columbia Strike  
Protesting both the university’s close ties with the Pentagon and its racist treatment of residents of the Morningside Heights neighborhood, 700-1,000 rebellious students take over and occupy a number of campus building for five days before they are violently cleared out by 1,000 cops. National SDS proceeds to issue a public statement calling for “two, three, many Columbias.”

**Aug. 19-25, 1968** – Chicago DNC  
Confrontations occur between Chicago police and anti-war protesters during the Democratic National Convention. Under the direction of Mayor Richard Daley, police in many cases indiscriminately club not only anti-war protesters, but also bystanders, neutral observers and reporters all on prime-time national television.

**1969** — **Women’s Liberation**  
Marge Piercy publishes *Grand Coolie Damn*, a powerful indictment of male domination in the New Left. Many women involved in SDS became leaders and activists in the Women’s Liberation Movement.

**1969** – **SDS splits**  
SDS’s final national convention ends in factional chaos between strait-laced Maoists and the weed-smoking bomb throwers who would become the Weather Underground, an urban, clandestine guerrilla army that took its name from a Bob Dylan song.

**March 6, 1970** — **Weatherman**  
Three Weatherman killed in a Greenwich Village townhouse when bombs they were making exploded prematurely. The Weather Underground carried out hundreds of non-lethal bombings of high-profile corporate and governmental targets over the next six years before peetering out.

**May 6, 1970** — **Student Strike**  
1,000 campuses go on strike against government killings at Kent and Jackson State, the expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodia.

# sds

## The signature organization of the 1960s student left has been reborn

BY MATT WASSERMAN

Three decades after its storied meltdown, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) is back. And it’s reemerged into a country that looks strangely the same. The United States is bogged down in another unpopular war, the corporatization of the university continues, people of color are fighting to be treated as full citizens. Yet two things are conspicuously missing: the widespread rebellion that goes by the catch-all name of “the ‘60s,” and militant, mass organizations like the Black Panthers and SDS that were on the frontlines of the struggle.

When the anti-corporate globalization movement burst on to the scene in 1999’s famous Battle of Seattle the disruption of the World Trade Organization summit proved that direct action still has the ability to win the hearts of a generation. Then September 11 changed the game. With the failure of mass marches to stop the war, protest movements grew moribund, unable to regain its early momentum in the new, fear-based climate of the Bush administration.

It’s not that nothing is happening. Local collectives like Common Ground in New Orleans or the Kensington Welfare Rights Union in Philadelphia, and single-issue organizations like Critical Resistance and

United Students Against Sweatshops continue to wage important fights. But unlike their counterparts on the right, they have been unable to join their movements into a coherent political struggle. The sum of “the movement” is less than its parts.

On the student front, the new SDS is the best bet. There’s enormous potential out there, but it is unorganized and without outlet; expressing itself in anti-Bush t-shirts, rather than substantial challenges to power. The missing link between discontent and organized resistance is exactly the kind of *participatory* group SDS promises to be. We need organizations that are capable of naming, analyzing and fighting the system that lies beneath George W. Bush’s actions. Organizations that enable any group of committed students can join and play a conscious role.

The core SDS concept of participatory democracy provides a means of uniting disparate struggles as part of a broader, decentralized movement where students learn along the way. The involvement of a number of old SDS stalwarts gives the new SDS an edge in confronting, understanding and transcending the legacy of the original student New Left.

As of its founding conference this summer at the University of Chicago, SDS claims over 160 chapters. While there are Harvard and Yale chapters, the new SDS

has significantly broadened the starting demographics of its historical progenitor with an enormous number of chapters at community colleges, state universities and high schools.

The Olympia, Washington chapter was the main group behind the blockade of Stryker tanks being shipped to Iraq this summer, the most militant and promising anti-war action of the last year. Hundreds of students, many from Evergreen College braved pepper gas and arrests to actually obstruct the war effort. In New York, Pace University SDS claimed credit for scaring pro-war Democratic Senator Hillary Clinton from making an appearance.

Discussing the events and aftermath of the uprisings of 1848, Marx claimed, “the tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living.” In the next line, he adds that in the course of “creating something that did not exist before,” revolutionaries “conjure up the spirits of the past to their service... in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored disguise and borrowed language.” The new SDS has donned its costume; here’s hoping it’s not a “second time farce.”

*Matt Wasserman is a founder of Reed College SDS. For more information, [studentsforademicsociety.org](http://studentsforademicsociety.org)*

# Reality Bites

## TELEVISION WRITERS STRIKE

BY MICHELE MILLS

A reality show that features Tyra Banks putting a group of wannabe models through fashion boot-camp hardly seems a likely candidate to be at the center of a potentially industry-altering movement. Yet it is.

On July 21, the twelve-person writing staff of *America's Next Top Model* became the first reality TV writers to go on strike. We ask to be represented by the Writer's Guild of America West (WGAW). We ask for a fair wage and basic benefits such as health insurance, pensions, wage minimums, residuals and credits. Although no other reality TV writers have gone on strike, over 1,000 have signed cards indicating that they want union representation.

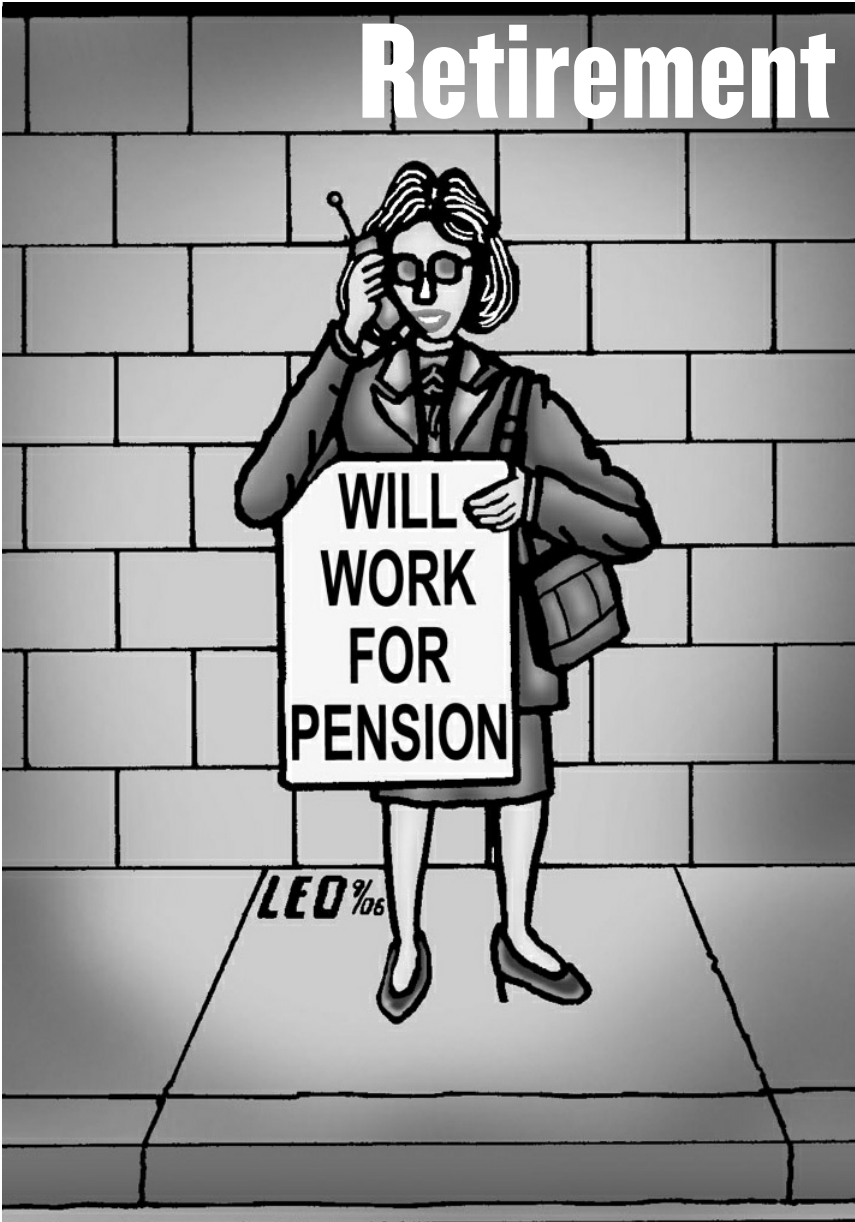
While reality TV writers do not write dialogue, we are storytellers who take hundreds of hours of footage and create structured stories in script form. We have contributed greatly to the success of a highly profitable TV show which is about to start its seventh season. We are only seeking the basic benefits that others in our industry enjoy. The new CW network (which is born of a merger between UPN's parent company CBS and Warner Brothers) is adamantly opposed to this. Why all this resistance over 12 people seeking relatively inexpensive benefits? Conceding will open a Pandora's box for the entertainment industry.

Reality shows have become a significant source of revenue for the entertainment industry, largely because these shows are generally non-union. When "The Real World" came along in 1992 and kicked off the reality TV genre as we know it, no one thought reality TV would be around long. The shows became a free-for-all in terms of wages and working conditions. Fourteen years later, reality shows are a mainstay of the industry. Nine of the top 20 television shows for the 2005-06 season were reality programs. While revenues have risen, the cost to make these shows remains a fraction of that of traditionally scripted shows.

Unionization in reality TV is strongly discouraged. No reality show writers have been able to unionize. A few positions, like editors on some reality shows, have been able to organize with other unions. With the WGAW, however, there is an even greater incentive for the network to dig its heels in against us.

The proliferation of reality shows has resulted in less covered work for WGA members, and thus has weakened the guild's power. The WGA will be renegotiating its master contract with the networks in 2007, and an industrywide strike is a distinct possibility. Reality television, it turns out, could be a major bargaining chip if that happens. If reality writers are part of the WGA we will be part of that strike. If not, the network will maintain a source of cheap programming to help them ride out a long WGA strike.

So the 12 of us are caught between a rock and a hard place. The network and the union have locked horns, while we linger on the picket line, stuck in a stall-riddled National Labor Relations Board process that will likely last longer than our jobs. My hope is that a mediator will emerge to find a way to remove us from the middle of this tug-of-war and get us a fair deal. Then again, fair deals don't seem to be much in fashion these days.



BY ERIC LAURSEN

After a debate that ground on mind-numbingly, for years, Congress in August birthed one of the most momentous pieces of domestic policy legislation in decades. The troublesome infant was the Pension Protection Act of 2006, and it affects every working person in the United States.

Briefly, the bill compels companies that offer traditional, guaranteed pension plans to their workers to cover 100 percent of their long-term liabilities within seven years. Many employers' plans are now seriously underfunded, meaning they aren't projected to have the money to pay all benefits to their retirees going out the next several decades. Airlines, which have especially serious pension shortfalls, were gifted an additional 10 years to get their houses in order. Taxpayers benefit, congressional sponsors of the bill contend, because the government, which insures traditional pension plans, would otherwise be on the hook should any of these companies go bankrupt. Some 44 million workers and retirees are in traditional pension plans today.

The bill provides a big boost to the financial services industry, too, which has made billions supplying investment services to 401(k) plans – the vehicle that's quickly replacing traditional pensions. 401(k)s give workers a retirement savings account, sometimes with employers chipping in a contribution, but with no guaranteed minimum benefit when they retire. More than 45 million American workers have 401(k)s.

Previously, conflict-of-interest rules made it difficult for firms that manage retirement accounts for 401(k) participants to also offer them broader investment advice. The Pension Protection Act eases these rules, with supporters arguing that workers desperately need advice and encouragement to save if they're going to build up a substantial nest egg

to retire on. It also makes permanent the \$15,000 limit on annual 401(k) contributions, which was upped from \$11,000 in Bush's 2001 tax-cut bill.

### DISMAL RECORD OF 401(KS)

What does all this mean – especially for workers in their 20s and 30s, who probably don't have a job that offers a pension, or who have a 401(k) to which they can't contribute much since they're too busy repaying college loans or just keeping up with rent or health insurance premiums?

Not much at all, say George W. Bush and the 93 senators who voted for the bill. Companies still have every reason to want to scrap their traditional pensions, because the bill makes them more expensive to maintain. It actually could undermine healthy plans by making it easier for companies to pull money out of them. But traditional pensions aren't much good to younger workers anyway, proponents say. The workplace isn't like it was in the days of lifetime employment: A person in her 20s is likely to change jobs frequently between now and the time she retires. A 401(k) account you can take with you – benefits built up in a traditional plan you can't.

But were the old days so different? According to studies by the Employee Benefit Research Institute, younger workers were always more prone to change jobs than veterans, even privileged whites in the 1950s. They gravitated toward stabler jobs that offered traditional pensions when they reached their 40s and 50s and started to think about retirement. Today, workers are likely to remain peripatetic for longer, but they still need to accumulate some substantial assets once retirement looks to be only a couple of decades away.

Mutual fund companies and other financial services providers have been touting 401(k)s as the solution for years. Congress, through legislation dating back to the last round of pension reforms in the 1970s and including the

# Retirement Insecurity

## WHY YOUNGER WORKERS NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE NEW PENSION RULES

Pension Protection Act, has been encouraging employers to get out of the retirement business and workers to shoulder more of the responsibility.

But the record of 401(k)s enabling workers to build up assets has been dismal. Fully one-third of employers in a recent study by Deloitte Consulting said that only about 70 percent of their workers participate in their 401(k)s, and less than a quarter reported participation rates above 90 percent. Only 13 percent of companies in the survey agreed that most of their employees "are/will be financially prepared for retirement."

Then there's Enron. "America's most innovative company" (according to *Fortune* magazine) was just one of thousands of employers that loaded up their 401(k)s with company stock. Settlements last year with the defunct energy company and this August with the estate of Ken Lay, the late Enron CEO, are likely to net the 20,000 ex-employees only a fraction of what they lost. Yet a survey last year by consultant Greenwich Associates showed that company stock still makes up an average 23 percent of 401(k) plans' assets.

### A RECIPE FOR DISASTER

Are workers to blame for low participation rates and, often, poor investment decisions? Financial services firms, employers, and conservative lawmakers generally think so. Education and professional advice are the answer, to be supplied by the same firms that sell investment products to workers. But the evidence is that the crushing cost of health care, education and housing have destroyed Americans' ability to save and turned the United States into the world's biggest debtor society. In a recent ACNielsen survey, 22 percent of Americans said they have no spare cash after paying their living expenses. If you're a worker in your 20s or 30s, the pressure may be compounded when your Baby Boomer parents need elder care, and skyrocketing medical costs force you to step in to help – maybe even caring for them yourself.

Thus, the Pension Protection Act encourages employers to slough off their traditional pension obligations while leaving employees with little ability to build up assets on their own. Ironically, Bush signed it into law just as he was testing the waters for a revival next year of his proposal to let Social Security partially dissolve into a system of voluntary private investment accounts.

Few long-time observers believe there's much chance that employer-based pensions can be revived – employers simply don't want to offer them anymore. With hard-pressed workers unable to save, Social Security's role as the only truly guaranteed retirement benefit becomes more crucial than ever. With Bush again stumping for privatization, the November elections will help determine its chances of survival.

# Hasan Shakur’s Last Words Were of the Struggle

BY WALIDAH IMARISHA

HUNTSVILLE, TX.—Hasan Shakur, aka Derrick Frazier, aka #999284, is dressed all in white. He has a little ‘80s afro and solemn eyes. Despite towering over the prison guards, he retains the youthful face of a 15-year-old. Visiting is only through glass, and Hasan sits in a cage, the telephone pressed to his ear. It is Aug. 29, just a breath away from the 31st. I am visiting someone who has an execution date set. The glass between us reflects the light from the vending machines behind the cages, and it looks like ‘Pepsi’ is written sliding down Hasan’s skin like tears, his face cracked right down the middle.

“Whether they murder me or not on Friday, I’m telling you, watch what Ima do, the ancestors are gonna be proud,” he tells me. Two days later, Hasan Shakur was executed by the state of Texas. The victim’s family cheered when he was pronounced dead, while only his wife and support coordinator Debbie Frazier had been there to support him. Shakur told her to stay strong and that he would love her forever, and tried to get her to smile even as they slid the needle into his arm, according to the Associated Press. He was the 20th Texas prisoner executed this year.

His execution occurred less than one hour after the U.S. Supreme Court rejected three appeals and requests for reprieves, based on affidavits stating evidence that Shakur’s co-defendant Jermaine Herron was the one to commit the actual murder, and an affidavit detailing jury misconduct during his original trial.

Shakur was sentenced to death in October of 1998, at the age of 21. He was convicted of killing Betsey and Cody Nutt, but maintained his innocence in the murders until the very end. “I’ve professed my innocence for nine years and I will continue to profess my innocence for another nine years,” he said on August 31, while strapped down to the death chamber gurney.

“That’s where we go wrong, believing that simple shit,” Shakur said on Aug. 29. “The system is on track... it’s on track to ride over us.”

There was considerable doubt about Shakur’s conviction. There was a lack of physical evidence at the scene of the crime. Possessions belonging to a neighbor of the Nutts were found with Shakur at the time of his arrest. However, the only substantial evidence linking him to the actual killing was a coerced confession. He was intimidated by the interrogating officer, and promised a 30-year deal in return for his confession. In the videotaped interrogation, the officer informed the 20-year-old of his right to an attorney, to which he responded, “If I could afford one, I would.” The officer began to question Shakur, despite his obvious desire for a lawyer.

“The videotaped ‘confession’ became the prosecution’s smoking gun,” wrote the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty on Aug. 31, 2006. “With no physical



Hasan al-Shakur with his wife, Debbie Frazier, taken in early October 2005. WWW.HASANSHAKUR.COM

evidence linking Frazier to the scene of the crime, the district attorney relied on the coerced confession to convince a nearly all-white jury that this young black defendant was, in fact, guilty of killing a white mother and child.”

Shakur’s lawyer did not mount a defense to show any mitigating circumstances, the fact that he had an abusive father, a drug addicted mother he loved dearly who overdosed when he was 15, or that he didn’t finish the 7th grade. He did not work to show Shakur as a human being. The attorney’s career was

work they all started and hoped his supporters on the outside would continue working for their release.

“Our people don’t prepare for the future, you know?” Shakur said. “It took us damn near thirty years to recover after we lost Malcolm. We have to set it up so that things will continue even if they take us out, cause you know that’s what they’re going to do.”

He founded Operation LIFE, an organization and newsletter to improve conditions in and out of prison. He organized anti-violence concerts, events, meetings, provided guidance and support, networking, strategic planning and visioning for a number of different organizations. He also served as the Minister of Human Rights for the New African Black Panther Party, a recently-formed organization that works in line with the principles of the original Black Panther Party.

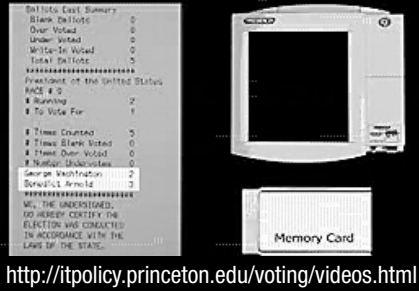
A believer in revolution, Shakur supported all conscious people and all prisoners, especially political. He knew that the conditions he suffered and the judicial railroading he received were inseparable from poverty, from poor education, from criminalization, from racism and white supremacism and capitalism. He knew that the astronomical rates of poverty and incarceration around black people were not a glitch in the system, even if some black people bought into that myth. “That’s where we go wrong, believing that simple shit,” he said on Aug. 29. “The system is on track... it’s on track to ride over us.”

In the wake of his execution, Shakur’s wife and support coordinator Debbie Frazier feels it is important to continue to show his innocence and to bring light to the inherent flaws in the system. “We have to keep working, that’s what we’re going to do,” she said. “We’re just going to keep working, for him, for the others. We’ll free his name.”

## Nat’l briefs

### SCIENTISTS FIND DIEBOLD VOTING MACHINES VULNERABLE

Princeton University computer scientists analyzing a 2002 Diebold electronic voting machine were able to install “malicious software” capable of modifying all of the machines’ records and auditing mechanisms so that no voter fraud could be detected. In a Sept. 13 “independent security study” of Diebold’s AccuVote-TS, which was published on a Princeton University website, the scientists described the Diebold machine as “vulnerable to a number of extremely serious attacks that undermine the accuracy and credibility of the vote counts it produces.”



<http://itpolicy.princeton.edu/voting/videos.html>

As a result of their study, the scientists also discovered that the access panel door on Diebold’s AccuVote-TS machine can be opened with a generic key used that can be bought on the Internet. “The exact same key is used widely in office furniture, electronic equipment, jukeboxes, and hotel minibars,” wrote Princeton Professor Edward Felten on his Princeton blog, freedom-to-tinker.com. The 2002 AccuVote-TS voting machine will be used in as many as half of the 357 counties using Diebold equipment in the 2006 elections.

### LOCAL COPS CONNECT TO FEDERAL DATABASE

Boston is the trial city for a new plan to equip state and local police with access to a new federal database, according to a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) press release Sept. 14. The database will merge two main federal fingerprint databases, including DHS data on foreign visitors to the U.S. and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) fingerprint identification system. The FBI program is part of the National Crime Identification Center, the nation’s main criminal database. The program is designed to help local law enforcement authorities detain individuals flagged in the system for immigration violations.

### DRIVERS LOSE PRIVACY

Meanwhile, in a Michigan case challenging that police violated a defendant’s privacy by running his license plate without probable cause, leading to his arrest, the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on Sept. 5 that the Fourth Amendment does not protect motorists from computer checks even if there is no cause for heightened suspicion.

### JUDGE RULES FOREST SERVICE CANNOT CHARGE USER FEES

A federal magistrate ruled that the U.S. Forest Service violated its congressional authorization by charging fees to use trails, picnic areas and campgrounds outside of developed recreational areas, reported the *Arizona Daily Star*. The 2004 Recreation Access Tax “user fee” program has been heavily criticized since it was begun as a trial program in 1996 at the behest of the American Recreation Coalition, a strong lobbying group comprised of more than 100 companies and organizations linked to the outdoor recreation market. More than 4,500 national forest sites have been included in the program.

### GOVERNMENT OUTSOURCES COUNTER-TERRORISM SERVICES

The Iraq War and the “war on terror” has created such a demand for clandestine services that all 16 U.S. intelligence agencies have been forced to outsource to contractors, The *Los Angeles Times* reported Sept. 17. The National Counterterrorism Center, created in 2004 to focus on counter-terrorism efforts, reports that more than half of its employees are not U.S. government employees.

## MEXICO

“This has been the year of living quixotically on the Mexican Left, of dreaming up new ways of organizing and protesting and of taking these new ways into the streets.”

# Mexican Leftist to Lead “Government in Resistance”

JOHN GIBLER REPORTS FROM MEXICO CITY

On July 29, Antonia Acevedo Perez, 59, locked up the Star Eatery – a lunch stand outside a popular market in Oaxaca City – and left for the nation’s capital. She was among tens of thousands who left their homes and jobs in rural Mexico not to head to the border or seek employment in bigger cities, but to defend their votes. On July 30, in what became the largest political mobilization in the country’s history, more than two million people took to the streets of Mexico City to demand a vote-by-vote recount of the 41 million ballots cast in the July 2 presidential election.

After months of illegal campaign tactics against him and serious anomalies in the official vote count, the center-left opposition candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, alleged fraud and initiated a series of massive marches and protests in Mexico City. At the July 30 march and protest gathering, López Obrador called for his supporters to set up encampments down several major avenues and the Plaza de la Constitución, or Zócalo, the symbolic heart of Mexican politics, and to stay there until the federal electoral court granted the vote-by-vote recount. Thousands of people from every state in the country, and from every neighborhood in Mexico City, heeded his call, covering the Zócalo, Madero, Juárez, and Reforma avenues with the plastic roofing of large, white tents.

But the court denied a full recount, and instead, on Sept. 5, certified the results of the election and declared right-wing Felipe Calderón Hinojosa of the National Action Party (PAN) president-elect. The court’s ruling chided President Vicente Fox from the PAN for illegally campaigning on behalf of Calderón and acknowledged the illegal use of slanderous television advertisements calling López Obrador “a danger for Mexico,” but failed to make public the results of an official recount of 9 percent of the ballots, further fueling the widespread belief that the election had been stolen. Calderón is scheduled to be inaugurated on Dec. 1.

Amid the hundreds of protesters who had gathered outside the guarded courthouse to await the ruling, Lilia Mogel, a hairstylist in her early 40s, covered her face in her hands and wept. She stepped back from the swarms of reporters and photographers and leaned against the wall. “They mocked our votes,” she said. “Just because we are poor, they ignored us.”

### TWO MEXICOS: RICH AND POOR

Millions who supported López Obrador’s focus on addressing poverty and uprooting corruption share Mogel’s outrage and her opinion that the poor in Mexico are objects of scorn and derision for the nation’s politicians. The presidential campaigns drew attention to sharp class divisions in Mexico, which the post-electoral conflict has exacerbated.

Now, after six weeks of camping out in the streets, López Obrador and his supporters are raising the stakes. They called for a National Democratic Convention on Mexican Independence Day, September 16, during which more than a million “delegates” were convoked to vote on forming a “government in rebellion,” naming López Obrador their “president in resistance,” and laying the foundation, they claim, for a New Republic.

“There are going to be two presidents here, one for the rich and one for the poor,” Acevedo



Perez from Oaxaca said after registering for the convention at a sign-up table on the edge of the Zócalo encampment. “We, the poor, are going to be with our president, hence the convention, hence the resistance.”

### GOVERNMENT IN RESISTANCE

The ambition behind the National Democratic Convention is staggering: nothing less than naming an alternative president and setting in motion the overhaul of the three branches of government. López Obrador spoke in the grandest of terms in the days before the convention, saying that it would mark “the abolition of the regime of corruption and privilege” and serve as the foundation of a new, “legitimate government.” But he also backtracked a bit. “What would it mean in practice if the convention decides to build a new government?” he asked during a recent speech. “A protest against the usurpation.”

Jesusa Rodríguez, an accomplished actress and theatre director, is López Obrador’s Master of Ceremonies for his daily speaking events in the Zócalo and one of the main organizers of the convention. One day last week, in between meetings, cell phone calls, handing files and papers to helpers and introducing actors on stage, she sat down for a brief interview. I asked how were they planning to organizing the discussions and voting of more than a million people packed into the Zócalo and surrounding streets.

“That is the big question,” she answered. “When you hold a speech before 2 million people that is one thing, but how do you hold a convention? Thus, what this is all about is a founding act, and the convention will continue for the months or years necessary. The point is not to begin and wrap everything up on the 16th. It will be the founding act of a New Republic. Then the work will begin.”

The convention organizers set out to register more than a million “delegates,” more than twice the number of people that can be packed into the Zócalo. The delegates, proudly wearing their registration badges, were asked to vote on whether they recognize “the government of usurpation,” whether they will create a government in resistance or a national civil resistance coordination committee, and whether they will elect a president, a government chief, or a coordinator. During a recent speech in the Zócalo, when López Obrador listed these options, the crowd chanted, without hesitation: “Presidente! Presidente! Presidente!”

### A MILLION IN THE STREETS

On Sept. 16, the Zócalo housed the forces of two different Mexicos. At 9:20 a.m., President Fox watched as over 20,000 soldiers held an Independence Day parade in the Zócalo, emptied of its tents and protesters only the night before. But by 6:20 p.m., the Zócalo and all

surrounding streets were filled to capacity with over a million “delegates” there for the National Democratic Convention.

Billed grandiloquently as a National Democratic Convention, López Obrador’s gathering leaves much open to criticism. López Obrador and his inner circle laid out the choices, leaving the million or so participants to vote only yes or no on either/or issues. The “voting” itself was carried out by hand raising, violating one of the principle tenets of electoral democracy: the option of vote secrecy. The million or so “delegates” represent less than one percent of the population. Moreover, the differences between the choices were mostly symbolic; whether, for example, one calls López Obrador Coordinator or President in Resistance, his plans will be the same.

López Obrador and the Convention organizers blatantly ignored the vote of the people when it came to the membership of the National Commissions of the government in resistance. Point number ten on the “ballot” was the approval of 30 members for three different commissions – the leadership of the movement. Voters were asked to approve all 30 with a single show of hands. The crowd unanimously supported the proposal with their hands in the air, while shouting in unison: “No Ímaz! No Ímaz! No Ímaz!” Carlos Ímaz, discredited in a national bribery scandal in 2004, was on the ballot for the Civil Resistance Commission. But López Obrador and his organizers waited for the shouting to die down, and then moved on without so much as addressing the issue.

The symbolic power of the convention itself, however, is significant. López Obrador is able to mobilize massive numbers of supporters – too many for the state to attempt a police or military repression – and his emphasis on addressing endemic poverty and the marketing of influence in the government resonates deeply with millions upon millions of Mexicans.

But López Obrador is not alone in calling people out of political complacency. This has been the year of living quixotically on the Mexican left, of dreaming up new ways of organizing and protesting and of taking these new ways into the streets. Since Jan. 1, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation has set out on a nationwide listening tour called *The Other Campaign* (see p.10) where Subcomandante Marcos has traveled as the anti-candidate, calling out the voices of the underdogs of the Mexican left to share their stories of organizing and resistance. Also, in Oaxaca, a radical teachers union protest exploded into an unarmed grassroots uprising after Governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz unsuccessfully tried to break up the teachers’ encampments with teargas and truncheons on June 14. The teachers and outraged citizens shut down the state government and took over statewide television and radio stations in a continuing, pitched battle to oust Ruiz Ortiz.

López Obrador has pulled the largest numbers of people to his mobilizations, but has failed to allow them to take proactive roles in the movement beyond standing in the sun and the rain, filling encampments and raising their hands.

I asked Acevedo Perez what she hoped to see come out of the convention.

“What we hope for is to improve Mexico,” she said, “to no longer be trampled on by the rich, those that invalidated our votes. We want the people to choose their government. Without the people, a president is nothing.”

**LEFT:**  
A supporter of López Obrador shouts against electoral fraud at a Sept. 1 rally in Mexico City. PHOTO: JOHN GIBLER

**BELOW, COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP:**  
Two members of APPO protect a street blockade in Oaxaca City. PHOTO: LUIS ALBERTO CRUZ HERNANDEZ;

Masked wrestlers play out the conflict between Felipe Calderón and Andrés Manuel López Obrador at the protest encampment on Reforma Avenue on Aug. 6, 2006. PHOTO: JOHN GIBLER;

On Aug. 1, more than 3,000 women from the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO) marched through Oaxaca de Juárez banging on pots and pans to demand the ouster of Gov. Ulises Ruiz Ortiz. PHOTO: JOHN GIBLER



JAMES DARIA REPORTS FROM OAXACA DE JUÁREZ, MEXICO

The people of Oaxaca are waiting anxiously to see if Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, the state’s embattled governor, will be forced out of office in talks between the federal government and the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO), a broad-based social movement that emerged this summer out of a failed attempt to crush a striking teachers union.

“Can you imagine what is going to happen to us if Ulises doesn’t fall,” says Emma, a twenty-something secretary, mother-to-be and daughter of a retired teacher. “We’ll all be screwed. It will be so much worse than before.”

Located in the rugged mountains of southern Mexico, Oaxaca (pronounced “whuh-hahk-uh”) is one of Mexico’s poorest

and most indigenous states with over 60 percent of the population being of native origins. The Oaxacan state government, which has been controlled with mafia-like efficiency since 1929 by the Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI), has been able to force allegiance by a policy of repression or reward in which those who obey receive economic perks and those who disobey go to “jail or the cemetery.”

Filling the vacuum left by a discredited state government that is unable to meet in public buildings now blockaded by outraged citizens, APPO claims to be the voice of the people and their organized political expression. However, it could not endure without the decisive participation of the general populace.

### RED DAWN

A clear example of this has been public reaction to the 70,000-strong state teachers union. Every year the union goes on strike in May leaving emptying classrooms throughout the state empty and filling the streets of the capital with protesters. Traditionally, the union and the state government both flex their political muscles until an agreement is reached concerning wages, hours and conditions. The people, normally apathetic to the demands of the union, quietly put up with the inconveniences involved. “The teachers only fight for their own personal benefit at the expense of the children and their education” was a refrain I repeatedly heard.

This year was different. At first, Oaxacans stood by and watched as Ruiz Ortiz undertook public works that destroyed much of the cultural patrimony of this colonial-era city as a pretext to divert public money to the campaign of the PRI’s presidential candidate and other lesser-known politicians. More brutal than his predecessors, Ruiz Ortiz maintained order through a campaign of repression and harassment against social organizations and the press. The tide turned when Ruiz Ortiz tried to violently repress the annual teachers’ strike with riot cops and tear gas. On the morning of June 14, now known as the Red Dawn, teachers mounted a counter-offensive against the attack, regaining control of the city’s central plaza and winning the hearts and minds of a generally apathetic and powerless populace.

Waking up to a city filled with tear gas and violence, the people took charge of the situation through collective action. Suddenly, everyone was against Ruiz Ortiz. People were mobilized throughout the state by the teachers union and a heterogeneous mix of social and political organizations. As seemingly everyone in Oaxaca has a family member who is a teacher, a tidal wave of resentment against the government grew as a total of five “megamarches” were organized with the largest reaching the astonishing number of around 300,000 people, or one out of ten people who live in the state.

In the ensuing weeks, radical social movements of workers, peasants, students, women and others aligned with the teachers literally kicked out the state government by blockading public buildings and repelled paramilitary style attacks by barricading the city. The government violence helped to maintain the spirit of resistance

alive and fortify public support for the protests. The radio stations occupied by protesters endlessly repeated the battle cry of Oaxacans: “Ya Cayó, Ya Cayó, Ulises Ya Cayó” (He Has Fallen, He Has Fallen, Ulises Has Fallen) and the song “Venceremos” (We Shall Overcome.) After years of mistreatment, poverty and the depopulation of rural communities due to migration, the general populace was ready for change.

“For a long time nobody said or did anything. It was only the teachers who stood up for us,” Emma explains. “But we never did anything about it. We never knew what to do. We didn’t think change was possible.”

### “I JUST WANT IT TO BE OVER WITH”

Now over three months have passed and there seems to be no end to the conflict. Living behind barricades and trying to earn a living in a collapsed economy in a lawless city suddenly overrun with crime and insecurity has created doubts among the people as to the probability of Ruiz Ortiz’s departure. Popular participation has fallen largely and putting up with disturbance has become a natural part of life. Excesses committed by the leadership of the APPO and their continuing radical discourse in times of dialogue and relative peace have created a widening gap between the “masses” and the supposed “vanguard” formed by the diverse social forces coalesced into the APPO.

“At first it was something really beautiful,” Emma says, referring to the bonds of unity and solidarity built among the people in opposition to the government. “Now I just want it to be over with.”

Fatigue has befallen even the teachers. In many of the barricades protecting occupied radio stations and their antennas, the number of teachers who turn out has significantly dwindled. The teachers, whose strike pay is normally protected under Mexican labor laws, have now gone nearly a month without pay and the effect on morale is huge. Some teachers are looking for part-time work to make ends meet. “I can’t believe the apathy even among my fellow teachers. It is scary being out here, sleeping here at night because you never know when they will come for us. It is scary but even scarier is the thought that this guy doesn’t go,” explained Yadira, a single mother and teacher manning the barricades in El Rosario neighborhood.

Oaxacans are waiting on word from Mexico City where movement leaders have traveled to initiate formal talks with the federal government to resolve the crisis. If the conflict isn’t resolved soon, it will continue until December when Ruiz Ortiz will have fulfilled two years in office and his allies in Oaxaca’s state legislature can choose a successor instead of having to call statewide elections.

Should Ruiz Ortiz and the PRI hold onto power, it is clear who will bear the brunt of the coming tide of repression: the same common people who rose up in joyous defiance against an unjust government believing in their personal and collective capacity to affect change. “They know who we are. They know who has been helping,” explained Emma. “If we don’t win, they will be coming for us.”



Tenants in El Barrio stand up for their rights. PHOTO: COURTESY OF MOVEMENT FOR JUSTICE IN EL BARRIO

# Zapatismo in El Barrio

BY RJ MACCANI

In the summer of 1969, the New York Young Lords Party launched a “garbage offensive” to force the City’s Sanitation Department to make more frequent pick-ups in East Harlem. Inspired by the community service programs of the Black Panthers, the campaign was the outgrowth of an extensive dialogue between the Young Lords and El Barrio’s residents and won the trust and respect of the community. Proudly inclusive of their Latino and Black neighbors, the New York Young Lords’ center of gravity were Nuyoricans (Puerto Rican New Yorkers) and the independence of their homeland, Puerto Rico, a central concern.

More than 35 years later, El Barrio is home to more than 100,000 people, half of whom are Latino. New waves of immigrants from around the world and white gentrifiers have

changed the face of El Barrio. Spanish is still its most spoken foreign language, followed now by Chinese and other Asian languages, Arabic, and several African languages.

Increasingly, immigrants from Mexico and elsewhere, many of whom lack U.S. citizenship (or any legal status for that matter), make up the Latino face of El Barrio. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 40 percent of El Barrio’s residents live below the poverty line. It is here that the Movement for Justice in El Barrio (MJB) is emerging. The radical reference point and inspiration is no longer the Black Panther Party but the Zapatistas – an indigenous-based rebel army in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas that has evolved over the past 12 years into a grassroots, social movement that espouses “leading by obeying.”

## BUILDING A MOVEMENT IN EL BARRIO

MJB was born in 2004 when residents of El Barrio began to organize against abusive landlords. To support them in addressing their grievances, the St. Cecilia’s Church on E. 106th St. hired Juan Haro, a founding member of the Zapatista Network United in Struggle (or AZUL in Spanish), a Mexican immigrant organization inspired by the Zapatistas. Haro worked with the residents and they successfully forced their landlords to clean up their act. At that point, St. Cecilia’s ended its involvement.

With residents in five buildings organized, Haro and MJB’s founding members decided to make the group into an immigrant-led, community-based organization that would fight for social justice and against all forms of oppression in El Barrio.

“What we are doing is organizing ourselves, having meetings,” said Victor Caletre of MJB. “We have leaders from each building that meet monthly to make decisions on how to keep fighting.”

Over the past two years, MJB has employed media tours, court actions, protests and direct actions against landlords, mortgage lenders and city institutions to challenge the unjust housing system in El Barrio. Through this work, MJB has grown to 180 members in 16 buildings. In August of 2005, MJB began studying locally-based social justice movements around the world to better understand their own struggle. They have focused much of their attention on the Zapatistas’ “Other Campaign” (*See sidebar*).

“The Other Campaign has given us the magic touch to find another way,” Caletre said.

This summer, MJB launched its latest initiative, a comprehensive community consultation process called “La Consulta del Barrio.”

On July 23, about 30 residents of El Barrio trickled in to the sparse basement of St. Cecilia’s for the first public meeting of the Consulta. They received bottled water, a photocopied news article about MJB, and copies of a Zapatistas’ declaration to read while waiting for the forum to begin. Young children were invited to draw and play.

Rotating between male and female members, MJB introduced its organization and the reasons for the Consulta. One member summed up the importance of the Consulta with humility, “We are but one organization. How can we make decisions for El Barrio? We’ve learned that we can fight together and that the people themselves can fight without having to be under one leader.”

Through an internal consultation of its membership, MJB

had generated a list of the eight biggest problems in El Barrio other than gentrification: sexual harassment of waitresses, mistreatment in the hospitals, bad service at the Mexican Consulate, police abuse, jobs paying less than the state minimum wage (\$6.75 per hour), the high cost of public transportation, proposed immigration laws, and the high cost of sending money back home (\$4-5 for a \$100 remittance) as well as mistreatment received from intermediary companies.

Empowered to speak, nearly everyone in attendance addressed El Barrio’s problems and the possibility of organizing to make change. Some people thought that MJB should expand its organizing beyond the borders of East Harlem and others thought that they should not pick just one problem but, rather, attempt to fight all these problems simultaneously.

When the forum concluded, each attendee filled out a ballot with their name, phone number and address, and circled the top three problems they would like to see addressed by MJB. Before leaving, attendees took stacks of flyers to hand out to their friends, family and neighbors. The flyers provided information on the location and hours of the public voting booths MJB was setting up in El Barrio as part of the Consulta.

After a month of voting, the first stage of the Consulta del Barrio was complete with 782 residents of El Barrio having participated. The three leading problems they identified: 1.) jobs that pay below minimum wage; 2.) proposed immigration laws; and 3.) poor service at the Mexican Consulate.

Stage two of the Consulta del Barrio is set to begin. Community dialogues will be held for each of these three problems, starting with the problem of poor service at the Mexican Consulate (including having to wait in line overnight just to receive service). The second forum will be on below minimum wage jobs and the third on immigration laws. MJB will decide which problem beside gentrification it will prioritize based on the level of community interest expressed at each forum.

## THE STRUGGLE IS LISTENING

Amidst the din caused by electoral fraud in Mexico’s recent presidential elections, it has become more difficult to hear the scream for justice coming from Mexico’s Other Campaign. There are two Zapatista sayings that are well worth remembering: “We walk slowly because we are going very far” and “Walking, we ask questions.” In less than a year since the Other Campaign was announced from the mountains of Southeast Mexico, the campaign has traveled from the Zapatista communities in Chiapas, through Mexico’s 32 states, and across the border all the way up to Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston and East Harlem.

The Other Campaign grows not by captivating its audience with flashy advertisements but, rather, through listening. Like the Young Lords of East Harlem’s past, the Movement for Justice in El Barrio is dialoguing with its neighbors today and preparing for surprising results tomorrow. Whether fighting for an array of causes in Mexico or halting gentrification in New York City’s El Barrio, the Other Campaign continues to walk and listen and grow.

*RJ Maccani lives in Brooklyn where he organizes with the NYC Childcare Collective and publishes zapagringo.com. This article is adapted from an earlier version that appeared at narconews.com.*

## WE WALK SLOWLY

MEXICO CITY—On Jan. 1 the Zapatista Army of National Liberation set out from the Lacandon Jungle for the second time since they rose up in arms on Jan. 1, 1994, the day that the North American Free Trade Agreement took effect. This time their military chief, Subcomandante Marcos, traded his assault rifle for a notebook and pen; clad in his trademark black ski mask, boots and fatigues, the rebel leader and scribe hit the road on a national listening tour, a rugged journey through Mexico’s most marginalized rural villages and big-city slums to gather stories of social rebellion from the underdogs (los de abajo) of the Mexican Left.

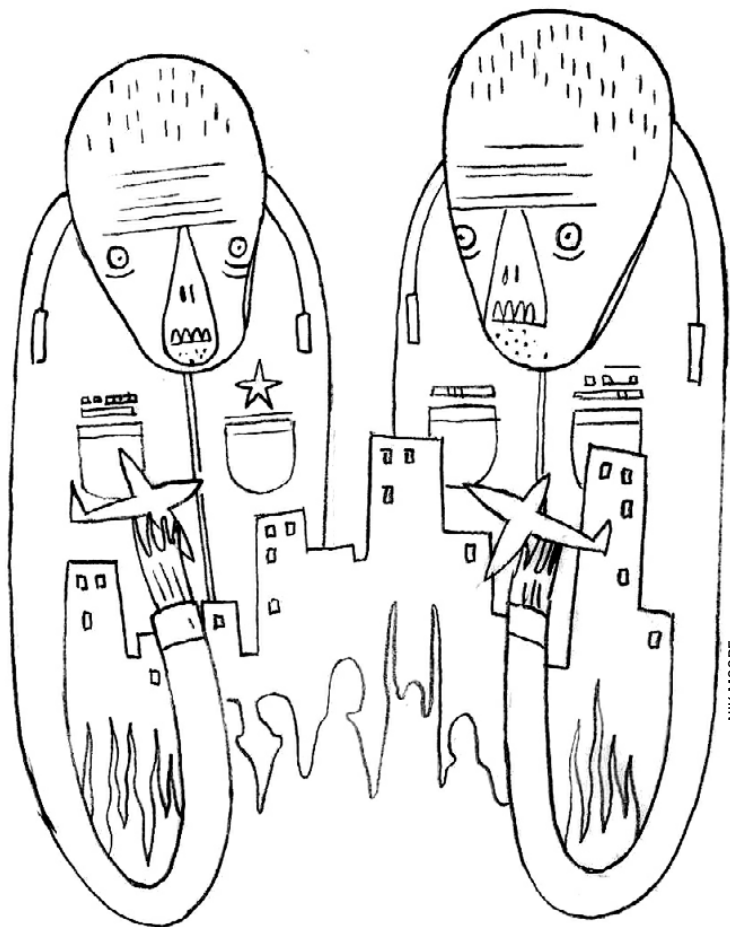
His sojourn was inspired by the Zapatistas’ Sixth Declaration from the Lacandon Jungle, which calls for a national movement to uproot capitalism and oust the corrupt political class. The tour, called the Other Campaign to distinguish it from the presidential campaigns that also kicked off in January, drew large crowds and steady streams of participants at every stop. The on-the-ground experience was tireless and inspiring, seven days a week, all day everyday, pulling into the forgotten corners of the country and asking people to share their stories of resistance and ideas of how to unite and move forward, independent of political parties.

The Other Campaign and many of its members were brutally repressed four months into the tour on May 4, when federal and state police used a tiny march of informal flower sellers as a pretext to beat and imprison members of the San Salvador Atenco-based People’s Front in Defense of Land, a member of the Other Campaign. After the repression Marcos suspended the tour and vowed to stay in Mexico City to fight for the liberty of those imprisoned during the crackdown. At midnight on Sept. 16, Mexican Independence Day, Marcos said during a speech in Atenco that a delegation of Zapatista commanders would soon travel to Atenco to take up the fight for the release of the political prisoners while Marcos reinstitutes the truncated listening tour, continuing to the north of the country and the border with the United States.

—JOHN GIBLER

# ‘Quiet Transfer’

## Israeli Occupation Forces Completing Annexation of East Jerusalem



Israel is close to implementing a long-term plan to transform the demographic structure of annexed East Jerusalem. Policies to revoke the residency permits of Palestinian Jerusalemites and to Judaize the city have been described as ethnic cleansing.

BY ELODIE GUEGO

After victory in the 1967 Six Day war, Israel annexed East Jerusalem - that part of the city that had been under Jordanian rule since the end of the British Mandate in 1948 - together with an additional 64 square kilometers which had been part of the West Bank. Jerusalem thus became Israel's largest city and was declared to be its 'united and eternal capital'. The international community, led by the United Nations, has continuously denounced this act of unilateral annexation, arguing it is a violation of the fundamental principle in international law prohibiting the forcible acquisition of territory. The international community has consistently considered East Jerusalem to be an occupied territory, thus akin to the West Bank and Gaza.

Their support of the Palestinian claim to East Jerusalem was bolstered by the fact that at the time of occupation Palestinians constituted the majority of residents in this sector of the city. Israel has engaged in a demographic battle to secure Israeli sovereignty over the whole city. For almost four decades, successive governments have implemented policies designed to transform the city's population structure and ensure the numeric superiority of Jews. Until the construction of the Wall in and around East Jerusalem, these objectives were pursued through a series of discriminatory regulations to reduce the Palestinian population by rendering their lives increasingly intolerable and encouraging the growth of Israeli settlements in Palestinian neighborhoods. Today the approximately 230,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites represent around 30 percent of Jerusalem's total population.

Under the post-1967 plan designed by Israeli military commanders, heavily populated Palestinian areas were not included, but land belonging to several Palestinian villages was incorporated into Jerusalem. Those who were left outside the new municipal boundaries, or who happened to be outside Jerusalem in 1967, remained residents of the West Bank and, as such, subject to military

rule. The Israeli government conducted a census of the Palestinian population living within the city's new administrative boundaries and granted permanent residency status to the Palestinian residents of the annexed areas. They were entitled to become Israeli citizens provided they agreed to swear allegiance to the State of Israel. Mass refusal to recognize Israeli sovereignty over occupied Jerusalem meant that only 2.3 percent of Palestinian Jerusalemites became Israeli citizens. The others became permanent residents of Israel subject to Israeli law and jurisdiction, just as foreigners who voluntarily settle in Israel.

Jerusalem permanent residency status differs significantly from citizenship. Permanent residents of Israel are entitled to live and work in Israel without special permits, to receive social benefits from the National Insurance Institute and to vote in local elections. Permanent residency is not automatically granted to the holders' children or spouses, however, and permanent residents, unlike Israeli citizens, do not enjoy the right to return to Israel at any time.

Between 1967 and 1994 Israel confiscated 24.8 square kilometers of land in East Jerusalem, 80 percent of it belonging to Palestinians. Land expropriation is continuing. Today a mere 7 percent of the area of East Jerusalem remains available to Palestinians. Confiscated land has mostly been used for the construction of Jewish settlements and settlers' bypass roads, in violation of international humanitarian law prohibiting an occupying power from transferring part of its own population into territory it has occupied. The Jerusalem Municipality has expediently used zoning restrictions to establish 'green areas', supposedly set aside for environmental and recreational purposes, but actually deployed as a tactic to remove the land from Palestinian use and create a reserve for Jewish housing.

The Town Planing Scheme (TPS), another key instrument of 'quiet transfer', restricts building permits in already built-up areas, the only areas available for Palestinian use. TPS has been used to restrict the development of Palestinian neighborhoods. Palestinians are only permitted to build one-

or two-story buildings, while adjacent Israeli housing units may have up to eight floors. Palestinians must go through a complex and time-consuming administrative process to obtain a building permit. These cost around \$25,000 - a considerable obstacle as Palestinian incomes are significantly below those of Israelis. Palestinians obtain a disproportionately small percentage of the building permits issued every year by the Jerusalem Municipality. Only 7.5 percent of the homes legally built during the period 1990-1997 belong to Palestinians.

### CENTER OF LIFE

In 1995 the Israeli Interior Ministry introduced a new regulation requiring Palestinian residents to prove they had continuously lived and worked in Jerusalem during the preceding seven years. The standard of proof demanded is so rigorous that even persons who have never left Jerusalem have difficulties meeting it. Palestinians who fail to prove that their 'center of life' is Jerusalem risk having their residency status revoked and their requests for family reunification and child registration rejected. The number of Jerusalem residency ID cards confiscated after promulgation of the 'center of life' policy rose by over 600 percent. Suburbs on Jerusalem's outskirts, to which many East Jerusalemites had moved as a result of earlier discriminatory policies, were declared to be outside Jerusalem, thus removing the residency rights of over 50,000 people. In order to defend their claims to residency and the social rights which go with it, some 20,000 Palestinians returned to live within Jerusalem's municipal boundaries.

Israel's 'center of life' policy seriously affects Palestinians' entitlement to health and social benefits, to family reunification, child registration and membership of the Israeli national insurance scheme. The 'center of life' is verified for each annual renewal of spouses' residence permits. Thousands of Palestinian children born in Jerusalem of parents who do not both hold a Jerusalem ID have been denied registration and are unable to exercise their basic rights, including their right to education. While the 'center of life' policy had been officially discontinued, the outbreak of the Al Aqsa intifada in September 2000 led to its reactivation. Since May 2002, Israel has refused to accept applications for family unification and refused to register the children of permanent residents who were born in the OPT.

*Originally published in Forced Migration Review.*

## World briefs

### FEMALE CANDIDATE JOINS RACE FOR UN'S TOP POSITION

Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga became the first woman to run for United Nations Secretary General when she announced she would join the race Sept. 16. The position is filled by the U.N. General Assembly according to recommendations from the Security Council, which is dominated by its five permanent members: the United States, China, Russia, France, and Britain. The 61-year old global governing body has been criticized for its lack of gender balance, with only 16 percent of undersecretary positions held by women. The Women's Media Center noted that after more than a decade after the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, no mechanisms to nominate women for the Secretary General have been established.



### CHAVEZ PROPOSES BANK OF THE SOUTH

Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez proposed the creation of the Bank of the South Sept. 15 at the 14th Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Havana, Cuba. The proposed bank would finance development projects in the global south as an alternative to funding from the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Loans from the WB and IMF, dominated by rich global north nations, have included structural adjustment requirements such as privatizing national resources and cutting social programs. Chavez challenged the 118 attending nations to act quickly to establish the new bank. "We don't accept the kind of development the World Bank or International Monetary Fund wants to push on us to change our hopes, our souls and our pain," Chavez said.



### NGOS ANNOUNCE BOYCOTT OF WORLD BANK, IMF MEETING IN SINGAPORE

The Singapore government arrested, deported, banned, or interrogated 50 activists from 16 countries as they attempted to attend the World Bank and International Monetary Fund meeting Sept. 19-20, reported Inter Press Service. The authoritative actions led to the declaration of a boycott of the meeting by 164 non-governmental organizations from 16 nations to show solidarity with those activists who have been denied freedom of speech.

### ARCTIC ICE SHEETS CONTINUE TO RECEDE

NASA researchers recently reported that Arctic sea ice is close to surpassing the record low in 2005, continuing decades of increases in melting rates. James Hansen, NASA climate researcher, stresses that governments have less than a decade to act to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in order to limit the increase in global temperatures to 1 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit). Unknown arctic islands have been exposed and polar bears continue to drown. The shrinking ice fields might open up the arctic to more oil, gas, and mineral exploration. Environmental justice activists are planning an alternative forum to coincide with the meeting of energy and environmental ministers of the most powerful nations plan in Mexico City Oct. 3-4 to discuss climate change.

# ‘The West’ Won’t Win Afghan War

BY ERIC MARGOLIS

As Canadian, American and British soldiers continue to die in Afghanistan, it is time the truth be told about this ugly little war. Much of what we’ve so far been told by our governments and media has been untrue, wishful thinking, or crass jingoism.

The respected European think tank, Senlis Council, which focuses on Afghanistan, just reported the Taliban is “taking back Afghanistan” and now controls that nation’s southern half. According to Senlis, southern Afghanistan is suffering “a humanitarian crisis of starvation and poverty.

“U.S. policies in Afghanistan have re-created the safe haven for terrorism that the 2001 invasion aimed to destroy,” Senlis found.

Claims that withdrawing Western garrisons from Afghanistan or Iraq will leave a void certain to be filled by extremists are nonsense. Half of Afghanistan and a third of Iraq are already largely controlled by anti-Western resistance forces.

Were it not for omnipotent U.S. airpower, American and NATO forces would be quickly driven from the area.

Last week, Canadian and British commanders boasted they were about to annihilate Taliban forces “surrounded” around Panjwai and Zahri. They crowed about already killing an “estimated 500 Taliban.”

After a storm of bombing and shelling, British and Canadian commanders admitted “we were surprised the enemy had fled.” Surprised?

“Good Morning, Afghanistan!” Doesn’t anyone remember the Vietnam War’s fruitless search-and-destroy missions and inflated body counts? Don’t NATO commanders know their every move is telegraphed in advance to Taliban forces?

Did Canadian officers making such fanciful claims really believe the Taliban’s veteran guerillas would be stupid enough to sit still and be destroyed by U.S. air power?

U.S., British and Canadian politicians say they are surprised by intensifying Taliban resistance. They have only their own ignorance to blame.

Attacking Pashtuns, renowned for xenophobia, warlike spirits, and love of independence, is a fool’s mission. Pashtuns are Afghanistan’s ethnic majority; long-term national stability is impossible without their co-operation.

What the West calls “Taliban” is actually a growing coalition of veteran Taliban fighters led by Mullah Dadullah, other clans of Pashtun tribal warriors, and nationalist resistance forces under Jalalladin Hakkani and former prime minister Gulbadin Hekmatyar. Many are former mujahadeen once hailed as “freedom fighters” by the West, and branded “terrorists” by the Soviets.

The UN’s anti-narcotic agency reports narco-state Afghanistan now supplies 92% of the world’s heroin. Production surged 20% last year alone. Who is responsible? The U.S. and NATO. Washington, Ottawa and London can’t keep pretending this is someone else’s problem. Drug money fuels the Afghan economy and keeps local warlords loyal to the U.S.-installed Kabul regime.

*This article is from CommonDreams.org*



## Fear and Defiance in South Lebanon

BY BILAL EL-AMINE

TYRE, Lebanon—I spent most of Lebanon’s month-long war in the southern coastal city of Tyre working as an interpreter for a British television station. Media from around the world resided at the Resthouse, a comfortable beach/hotel compound on the southern end of the city. It was a stopping point for thousands of fleeing southerners and a launching point for a number of somewhat scary forays into the deep south for journalists.

Tyre was not attacked as much as the villages around it, but a six-story building in the middle of town was leveled and before I arrived at the beginning of the war, a tall residential building housing the Civil Defense was bombed. There was also the commando raid at the city’s northern end that kept most of us up fearing that the Israelis were invading by sea.

It is true that Israel’s military campaign flip-flopped often and its goals kept changing, but the assault on civilians, particularly of the south, was relentless. I arrived in Tyre on the tenth day of the war just as the remaining inhabitants of the south were beginning to realize that Israel would spare no one.

The shape of the war became clear within

the first week or so. Lebanon’s infrastructure from the airport to bridges and roads were bombarded and an air, sea and land blockade was imposed, all in the name of preventing weapons from reaching Hizballah. A campaign of terror against civilians quickly followed. People’s homes were destroyed on top of them and those who fled were cold-bloodedly murdered in their cars, vans or buses.

But this was not a one-sided war as on so many previous occasions when Israel would simply roll over it opponents in a matter of days, if not hours. I kept waiting for the moment when the Israeli military machine would punch through the thin line of resistance fighters in the border villages and swallow the south whole as they did in 1982. But the moment never came. The Hizballah fighters at the front were unmoved by Israeli air power and no amount of armor could break through them.

Further back in the area around Tyre, another line of fighters sent northern Israel a daily dose of rockets. Hizballah’s katyushas would make a tremendous roar and streak out of sight in an arc headed south. These rockets were certainly not as smart and destructive as the ones the Israelis possessed but they at least subjected Israel,

for the first time ever, to a fraction of the terror they unleashed on Lebanon.

Most Lebanese could easily see that Israel’s response was completely out of all proportion to Hizballah’s capture of two Israeli soldiers and that something more was at play in the sheer scale of the attack. And as the Israeli ground offensive faltered day after day, the lunatics in Tel Aviv only intensified their destruction of Lebanon and the murder of its people. So much ordinance was dropped that Washington had to rush two planeloads of bombs to Israel. Around the same time, the US ambassador to Lebanon had the gall to deliver medical supplies to the Beirut port – bandages for the dismembered!

After the Qana massacre, in which more than 30 children were killed in an air attack, the Israelis were forced to suspend their air campaign for two days. Journalists took the opportunity to go survey the damage. What we saw was unimaginable destruction. The smell of death in the border villages like Bint Jbail was overwhelming, hungry cats and dogs roamed its streets for scraps of food, and the flies were merciless.

As we walked among the ruins, people seemed to emerge from under the rubble having spent nearly three weeks dodging bullets and bombs. I ran into a group of women, one barefoot and dazed carrying her child, her mouth white with thirst. It took her some time to realize where she was and what had happened.

We could barely believe it when the war ended. Never before has Israel abided by any ceasefire agreement or any kind of resolution coming out of the United Nations for that matter. Perhaps they had had enough after losing dozens of soldiers and over 50 of their mighty Merkava tanks in a last ditch effort to make it to the Litani River 18 miles north of the border, the goal of their month-long operation. I remember the last bomb that landed ten minutes before the deadline for the ceasefire. It was so close I could hear it whizzing through the air before it landed nearby, and then ... silence.

The smoke had barely cleared before hundreds of thousands of southerners loaded their makeshift mattresses on top of their cars and made their way home. What awaited them on the other end did not matter. They had had enough of living on school floors and in public parks depending on the charity and goodwill of others. They had sacrificed so much just to return to their precious south and live in dignity. With each Israeli aggression their love for their land only seems to grow stronger. No power, however mighty, will dream of depriving them of it again.

*Bilal El-Amine is founder and former editor of Left Turn magazine. This article originally appeared on electricintifada.net.*

### Report from Israel

## Everybody Lost This War

BY YONI MISHAL

TEL AVIV—Everybody lost this war. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah was quick to admit he did not expect Israel to react as hard as they did. This concession allowed the Israeli government to announce victory over Hezbollah – shortly followed by the Israeli confession of defeat, with hundreds of reserve soldiers demanding a national investigation of the war. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was forced to say that perhaps Israel didn’t win this war, after all.

Yesterday’s hero is today hanging in the town circle, and Olmert and Defense Minister Amir Peretz are everybody’s favorites to hate. What explanation can be found to understand the way this ridiculous plot unfolds? During the war, only a few weeks ago, I was part of the few that protested the war. Now I’m with the few who don’t.

There is a constant theme to the way people think. It doesn’t matter what they express out loud. The protest of the war now is about the government not allowing the military enough time to fight. There are calls for the resignation of chief officers because they did not manage the fighting well enough. Chief of Staff Dan Halutz was already accused of corrupt behavior, and former Chief of Staff Moshe Ya’alon has said that the soldiers killed in this war died for nothing. Harsh accusations.

Once again, something is missing here in this generals’ war taking place. Us - the people, both in Israel and Lebanon. Many on both sides are still living in destroyed homes with no aid, with restrictions on getting that aid. Many Israelis are getting prosecuted by banks and other big companies for debts made during the war. I would like to see all these high-ranking people step down, but soon enough new militaristic ones will replace them. The people, on the other hand, are left with nothing. This week’s discussions in the Israeli Knesset about next year’s budget are an indication that we will tear down the last strongholds of social-welfare establishments, with the war as an excuse.

What seems ironic to me is the story of our president Katsav, who is the formal representative of the people. He is being accused of embezzlement, sexual harassment and offering parole to convicted friends and relatives. Still, he is determined to stay in power. Truly, he is the face of our country. I couldn’t have said it better.



Juvenile

# Hustling FEMA:

## JUVENILE’S RESPONSE TO SURVIVING KATRINA

BY STEVEN WISHNIA

For the last 25 years, right-wingers have been hectoring America’s poor to stop depending on government handouts and be self-reliant. So they might like the opening lines of New Orleans hip-hop artist Juvenile’s response to Hurricane Katrina: “It’s crunch time now, fellas, no time to be cryin’ for mama.” On the other hand, the particular style of entrepreneurship endorsed in the track, “Get Ya Hustle On,” isn’t exactly legal: “We take the Pyrex and then we rock with it, roll with it.” In fact, it’s a ghetto Halliburtonism, a low-budget leveraging of government funds for personal profit:

*Everybody needs a check from FEMA  
So he can go score him some cocaine  
Get money! I ain’t gotta ball in the Beemer  
I’m just trying to live, I lost it all in Katrina*

The track – added to the *Reality Check* album after the flood – has got plenty of bounce, jeeping along off an ascending four-chord groove, and Juvenile raps with a fine mix of rhythmic punch and flow. Leftists will appreciate the denunciations of politicians as hypocrites and the angry observations of the post-flood chaos: “We’re starving, we’re living like Haiti without

no government/ Niggaz killing niggas and them bitches is loving it/ Fuck Fox News, I don’t listen to y’all ass/ Couldn’t get a nigga off the roof with a star pass.” On the other hand, it’s ultimately depressing. It’s one thing to see things as they are with clarity and rage, but is the only way out one that’s carcinogenic to the community? No possibility of revolution or solidarity? Is this the result of the nation being hammered for 25 years with the pervasive and obsessive cult of the market?

“The truth came out and the answer is: They ain’t gonna give a fuck about us,” Juvenile told AllHipHop.com last winter. But asked if the album signified a new era of political-mindedness for him, he answered, “I’m not like that. All you’re gonna catch me doing is telling my people, ‘Get what the fuck you gonna get and get it right now,’ man.”

I suppose this is the same debate that’s been roiling the more conscious factions of the hip-hop world ever since N.W.A. blasted outta Compton a generation ago with a dealer-financed demo and a vial of verbal AK-47s. Still, “Get Ya Hustle On” is catchy as fuck. I put it on a mix CD segueing into Marvin Gaye’s “Inner City Blues.”

BOOKS

# Amy and Izzy Make Waves

STATIC: GOVERNMENT LIARS, MEDIA CHEERLEADERS, AND PEOPLE WHO FIGHT BACK

BY AMY GOODMAN  
AND DAVID GOODMAN  
HYPERION BOOKS, 2006

ALL GOVERNMENTS LIE: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF REBEL JOURNALIST I.F. STONE

BY MYRA MACPHERSON  
SIMON & SCHUSTER, 2006

Maverick journalists are uncommon in U.S. history. By 1950, most had become domesticated, falling into line as publicists for official policy and the corporate mass media. They traded in what may have remained of their independence for pay raises, benefits, and social status.

Precedents for protest have always been too few. There were the muckrakers (Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, Ray Stannard Baker) in *McClure’s*, *Everybody’s*, and other publications from about 1902 to 1912. Muckraking was continued in small liberal magazines – *The New Republic* and *The Nation* – and in George Seldes’ newsletter, *In Fact*. It experienced a major revival

during the Vietnam War. *I.F. Stone’s Weekly*, *Ramparts*, the *Texas Observer* and the *Village Voice* muckraked. Seymour M. Hersh exposed the My Lai massacre; the *New York Times* printed the Pentagon Papers.

Today the dissenters are dispersed – Hersh, Amy Goodman, Alexander Cockburn, the Independent Media Center movement, commondreams.org, altnet among a myriad of other websites and blogs.

Two new, iconoclastic books are of interest and importance with regard to the problems of protest and honest reporting in America. They are *Static: Government Liars, Media Cheerleaders, and the People Who Fight Back* by Amy Goodman and David Goodman and *All Governments Lie: The Life and Times of Rebel Journalist I.F. Stone* by Myra MacPherson.

Amy Goodman, host of *Democracy Now!*, a daily one-hour radio and television show broadcast on more than 400 stations across the country, is a valiant journalist; David, an investigative reporter, is her brother. They previously authored a best-seller, *The Exception to the Rulers*.

In *Static*, they document the horrors, the atrocities, the deceptions of the George W. Bush era – presidential lies, torture incorporated, news reports funded and falsified (they quote Joseph Goebbels, Nazi propaganda minister, “The truth is the greatest enemy of the State”). Their research is extensive, and their findings are shocking.

They go on to recount the travail of Iraq War critics – Cindy Sheehan; Iraq Veterans Against the War; the Denver Three, who upstaged Bush at a speech before his supporters – and conclude with expressions of encouragement and hope from authors Alice Walker,

Robert Fisk, Eduardo Galeano, Arundhati Roy and Amira Hass.

I.F. “Izzy” Stone started out as a newspaperman and was a reporter and editor at the then-liberal *New York Post*, *The Nation* and *P.M.*, a left-leaning New York daily that expired in 1948. When he couldn’t get a job at the height of the Red Scare in the early 1950s, he founded *I.F. Stone’s Weekly*. With the assistance of his beloved wife Esther, he ran it from 1953 to 1971. “You may just think I am a red Jew son-of-a-bitch,” MacPherson quotes him as telling wary colleagues, “but I’m keeping Thomas Jefferson alive.”

A four-page newsletter, *I.F. Stone’s Weekly* built a circulation of more than 70,000. It challenged orthodox politics in America, the Vietnam War, the military establishment, conventional reporting.

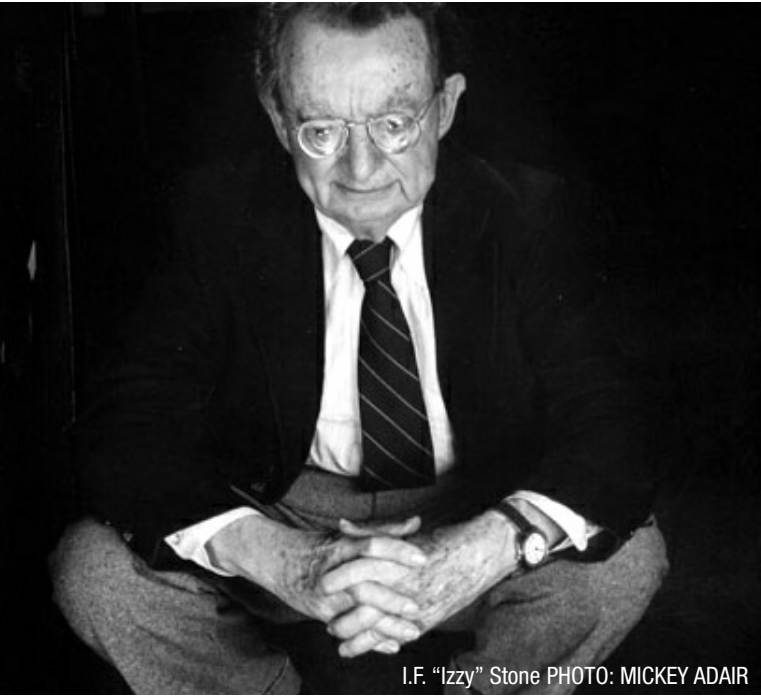
Stone was a unique and exceedingly imaginative reporter. He didn’t develop his scoops from anonymous sources but out of government records, transcripts and agency reports, all of which were publicly available but seldom consulted.

One of the exquisite ironies of Stone’s life is his journey from pariah to acclaimed oracle whose curmudgeonly genius is eventually embraced by the journalistic establishment that once shunned him.

MacPherson does an excellent job – she brings Stone and his times and his work and his views to the front. Anybody can learn a great deal about history and the practice of journalism from her book.


—DONALD PANETH

*Donald Paneth is the author of The Encyclopedia of American Journalism. He began his career as a journalist with the New York Times in 1944.*



I.F. “Izzy” Stone PHOTO: MICKEY ADAIR

## STAR OF GOLIATH



*You say you made the desert bloom  
What happened to my orchard?*

*You say you needed  
living room  
And so my land  
was tortured*

**THE STORY OF PALESTINE AND ISRAEL IN IMAGE AND SONGS WRITTEN AND SUNG BY DAVE LIPPMAN**

**20-minute DVD – excellent for classrooms, churches, houseparties**

*Audience accolades:*  
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“... made me realize I’ve got to go out and do something.”  
“A triumph.” – *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*

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# The Ecstasy of Exile

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

BLACK ROCK CITY, Nevada—“Welcome home!” He shouts. We hug and I look at Burning Man, a city rising in the vast Nevada desert. I came here to pour out the last water from New Orleans. A year of rage and sadness sloshed inside me and I hoped the desert would soak the last of it away. But was it possible to “come home?”

I had seen a city be flooded and a people made homeless. How could I let go of pain where no one wanted to be reminded of it? I went to Center Camp, a gigantic tent where the sun beamed on New Agers entwining limbs in slow dance. A woman leaned to me. “Why can’t this be the real world,” she paused. “Is the real world even real?”

Attendees often describe the event as truth and the outside as illusion. It is easy to feel this in an empty desert used as a stage to act out fantasy. Of course, fantasy is the refusal of separation. Hidden desires are acted out in hopes of revealing the true self. It is allowed even demanded. “Don’t be a spectator” is shouted by anyone who sees you watching rather than doing.

Burners speak of the event with religious intensity. The feeling of truth comes from this rare unity but it is a unity created by escaping differences not overcoming them. The real world separation from ethnic poor is finalized in the isolation of the desert. It is relevant because Burning Man borrows from cultures of color, to the point of being a form of minstrelsy.

Near my camp was a Hare Krishna site where whites with Hindu face-paint swayed and chanted. “We’re all one cosmic consciousness,” I was told. They smiled sweetly and fed me. Their sincere kindness eroded my guard. I felt a genuine openness. Our conversation turned to New Orleans. I tried to say how it divided our nation but heard “we’re all the same cosmic consciousness.”

It sounded less a profound truth than an escape from pain through denial. Like the many attendees with dread-locks and saris, they wore a mask of color. They enjoyed the freedom of otherness without the burden of history and the exposure to power that real people of color endure.

The next day a friend gave me two pills of ecstasy. “If you don’t find what you’re looking for,” he said, “these will help you forget you tried.” I pocketed them, walked around and found an art installation with rows of crosses for soldiers killed in Iraq. A veteran kneeled and wept.

Once, the Christian cross was a symbol of sacrifice to me. Now it seemed an empty icon. I needed communion and found a Common Ground activist. We had met in New Orleans. “I was here when we

heard about Katrina,” she said. “People said in that hippie way, it was meant to be.” Her eyes flashed, “I was like what the fuck is wrong with you.” We shook our heads. I gave her a pill, if we could not believe in joy we could induce it.

On the climactic sixth night of the festival, when burners set fire to a giant wooden effigy, I took half a pill. After the Man blazed and crashed I circled the inferno. My friend from New Orleans sat and stared into the fire. I hoped it burned away her memory of the flood.

I walked to Nexus, one of the large clubs. The mild glow of ecstasy forced me to feel my body. It left me knowing I have this small gasp of time on earth and the only meaning it can have comes from

how I share it with others.

Nearby a young woman stood stiffly. I remembered the crosses and said, “Here,” and put the last pill in her palm. She smiled, “You totally read me.”

I leaned in, “Remember the story of Jesus feeding the masses.” She nodded. “Maybe it wasn’t a physical miracle. Maybe he had them split bread until each had a useless bit and realized they sacrificed hunger for togetherness. No one was left out. Maybe that was the real miracle.”

She hugged her thanks. The ecstasy had worn off but a stronger joy reached through me. I gave away the pills that could numb my exile. It left in my mind a self-image I could believe in and while dancing, I held myself like home.



Pyronauts, fire performers, in front of the Man on the night of the Burn. PHOTO: ABJECTPHOTO BM 2006.

## THE SEX COLUMN

BY AMY WOLF

# Cybersex Goes Mainstream

Without life’s shouldn’ts, wouldn’ts and couldn’ts to hold them back, people have a lot more sex, experiment with orgies, furies, bondage and of course, own their own businesses. In *Second Life*, a popular online world, chatting, courting, fucking, and some all-American entrepreneurship replace the slaying and conquering common to other multi-user digital experiences.

Some describe MMOEGs (Massive Multiplayer Online Erotic Games) as places to “try out” fetish curiosities. They give the freedom to try on new skins, genders, bra-sizes, strap-ons, harnesses, pony-gear or just walk around totally naked. You can also opt to be a genderless and genitalless cube.

Bonnie Ruberg, a cyber and gender sexpert, warns that treating the online experience as a “trial” space creates a false hierarchy that privileges real over online behavior. Your online persona behaves differently and wants different things than the player at the keyboard. This separation is what enables the escape, the fantasy and ultimately the fulfillment of the experience. That’s why many players have numerous avatars (online personalities) with different wants, needs and gender.

One resident of *Second Life* (SL) interviewed by Ruberg said her only reason for participating was to run a small gallery in which she could show her paintings (the program allows you to place still images in the businesses or homes that you create). Although this artist is in the minority, the fact that sex is optional in *Second Life* is a big draw. Ruberg suggests that SL’s “appeal is the open-endedness.”

*Second Life* has a higher female to male player ratio than your typical MMORPG (Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games), and

with many of the male players choosing female avatars, this is no digi-sausage fest. Female gamers are drawn toward an exploratory experience, “one that is on your own terms and not predefined,” says Ruberg. It’s like going into a neighborhood video store that just happens to have a huge porn room in the back.

Kelly Rued is the founder of Black Love Interactive and is launching Rapture Online, an alternative to *Second Life*, in 2007. “Our design team is all women,” Rued says, “so that might explain the broad, multi-faceted view of eroticism in Rapture Online. There will be plenty of romance, fantasy and story, which is rare in explicit sex gaming.”

Probably the biggest draw for both genders is the fulfillment of all the things you shouldn’t, wouldn’t and couldn’t do. In SL, users have created a prostitution economy where hundreds of avatars will give you a steamy lap dance and a BJ for what in U.S. dollars could buy you a dog at Grey’s Papaya. But tip well, because that prostitute might own the cyber brothel you’re being serviced in.

Although you can strap yourself naked to a rotating board surrounded by broken glass, violence in *Second Life* is a no-no. You can experiment in fantasy rape, but you cannot actually rape another character, because the programming does not support it. “You cannot take full control over another Avatar. You always have the option to fly away,” explains Kyle Machulis of Nonpolynomial Labs. When entering the game for the first time, one must agree to abide by significant bylaws. They forbid intolerance, harassment, assault, disclosure, indecency and disturbing the peace. While in Sociolotron (a hardcore BDSM MMOEG), you can be enslaved, raped and get STDs, in *Second Life* you can only get pregnant.



A SNAPSHOT OF SECOND LIFE: Users create the characteristics of their online personas, or avatars.

There is an argument that when we get engrossed in living in a cyber world, we forgo living with the breathers. Cara Mia DiMassa wrote in the *Times* that in many ways, we’ve become what historian Daniel J. Boorstein warned about in 1961: “the first people in history to have been able to make their illusions so vivid, so persuasive, so ‘realistic’ that they can live in them.”

And that was 1961. Copious blogs are still dedicated to the question of realism. Is sex with your avatar guy “really cheating?” Are these online relationships less real? Nick Yee asked these questions in an online survey. One 30-year-old male answered, “the fact of physical separation is only a minor limitation; can a blind person not make friends? So why should it be that because we cannot physically see or touch the people in the game with us, we cannot interact in a meaningful way?”

FILM

# J. Lennon vs. T. Dick

THE U.S. VS. JOHN LENNON (2006)  
DIRECTED BY DAVID LEAF  
AND JOHN SCHEINFELD

Flush with all the drama of an illicit affair, John Lennon's gradual decision to "leave" the Beatles for Yoko Ono remains a major cultural event in American history. With poor Ono still blamed for the dissolution of perhaps pop music's greatest songwriting team, the political significance of this decision is too often overshadowed — as is Ono's role in Lennon's increased awakening as an activist. A rebel and virtual orphan practically from birth, Lennon had an innate mistrust of authority and a knack for provocation, traits that once filtered through Ono's gift for performance art, turned them into major figures on the political world stage, equally loved and despised.

The new documentary, *The US vs. John Lennon*, all too briefly touches on Ono's influence while, rather unsurprisingly, reinforcing Lennon as the ultimate counterculture icon. Starting with the inception of the Lennon/Ono relationship, the film examines Lennon's life as a self-consciously political artist whose high profile and very public demonstrations led to an eventual investigation by the Nixon administration, the FBI, and the INS. Co-produced by VH1, this plays like a socially con-

scious *Behind the Music* episode (oxy-moronic, I know), complete with flashy transitions, interviewees both relevant (Bobby Seale, Tariq Ali, G. Gordon Liddy) and irrelevant (Geraldo Rivera, Ron Kovic), and, thanks to Ono's involvement, fantastic music. Excepting Liddy, it's a love-fest from frame one, with everyone chiming in on Lennon's brilliance while deftly ignoring his infidelity, glibness and Springsteen-esque abuse of the working-class-origins card.

Still, the real prize here is archival footage of Lennon himself, that increasingly rare rock star who, despite his faults, offers an articulate voice for change, and who cuts through the film's unrepentant ass-kissing with a genuine sense of focused commitment. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Lennon actually did raise awareness about key issues of the era (especially Vietnam), and his Gandhi-inspired pacifist stance was so noble it looks almost quaint today. As one interviewee comments, Lennon always sacrificed his own image for the greater cause, refusing to bother with what other people thought of him as long as they got the message. Try and imagine greedy Paul McCartney (the George Lucas of music) ever even considering this...

Talented, witty, photogenic, confident, Lennon was in many ways the anti-Nixon, so it's not terribly shocking to learn how the disgraced president and his cronies put concerted effort into tapping his phones, trailing his car, and eventually starting deportation proceedings. (One can imagine Nixon watching Lennon at peace rallies and on TV while remembering a pasty, sweaty visage that literally paled in comparison to JFK's brilliant cream



PHOTO: IAIN MACMILLAN

glow in 1960). Thankfully, the obvious connection to Patriot Act surveillance is mostly unspoken, save for condescending doc whore Gore Vidal who thinks we're too dumb to catch on. Smartly folding concrete peace slogans into catchy melodies while staging (with Ono) unforgettable "performances" like the legendary bed-in, Lennon deserves a considerably more provocative film than this crowd-pleasingly safe one.

—CHARLIE BASS

The U.S. vs. John Lennon *is currently playing at Landmark Sunshine Theatre at 143 E. Houston St.*

FILM

# Forest Green Blues

OLD JOY (2006)  
DIRECTED BY KELLY REICHARDT  
KINO INTERNATIONAL

*Old Joy* is the story of two friends who embark on a weekend camping trip to escape from their everyday lives in present-day Portland, Oregon. Kurt, played by alt-country singer-songwriter Will Oldham, is a care-free drifter-type for whom this trip is an opportunity to reconnect with his old friend Mark (Daniel London). For Mark, the trip is a temporary retreat from his suburban life and imminent fatherhood.

This is not a story of two characters undergoing a life-changing experience, but rather a snapshot of two lives at a particular moment in time. It is the type of minimalist flick likely to resonate with its audience who, like the protagonists, are also torn between memories of their

carefree youth and coming to terms with adult responsibilities. The film is as much about the current political and social climate as it is about its character. This may be one reason why director Kelly Reichardt avoids radical transformations in the two men, as well as any clear-cut resolutions at the end.

Peter Sillen's cinematography is outstanding, especially his use of color. The greens of the forest scenes that make up the bulk of the film serve to really immerse the viewer. Even the scene where Will and Kurt set up their tent in a small dump, where people have deposited old kitchen appliances and a sofa, makes the forest look appealing. In addition to the cinematography of the wilderness, the varied colors of Portland's landscape also stand out. Reichardt makes the monotony of Mark's suburban neighborhood seem somewhat intriguing.

While the pace is at times too slow due to the lack of action, *Old Joy* makes up for this with a subtle complexity that departs from the predictable Hollywood narratives that sometimes make their way even into independent filmmaking. Also of note is the soundtrack by Yo

La Tengo, which is instrumental in setting the film's subdued, melancholy mood.

*Old Joy opens at the Film Forum on Sept. 20.*

—ANTONIO GOLAN



Will Oldham in *Old Joy*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

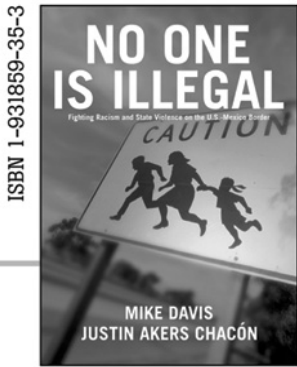
(cont. from page 2)  
and military support, the nature of Israel should be left to those who are members of that entity, those for whom it claims to represents and those who it oppresses.

Mr. Kassner seems to have a barbaric vision for humanity: no one should stop Israel from exterminating or displacing Palestinians today just because some historical crimes have not been addressed. Presumably this might-makes-right standard should be applied to all other state-sanctioned crimes.

That is the "national liberation" of which he speaks. The history of Zionism is one of exclusivism, racism and colonialism in ideology and in practice. And there are many, many Jews who have and continue to oppose Zionism and its equation with all Jewish peoples.

It's sad that Mr. Kassner has to rely on myths and the tired anti-Semitism charge. There is little disagreement among historians on the founding of Israel. The United States threatened and pressured other nations to support a division of Palestinian lands. Only six percent of the lands were owned by the Zionists but they were granted over 50 percent. Then, before the British mandate ended in 1948, Israel with its superior military force, invaded Palestinian lands. The "invasion" by Arab states came only after Zionist forces seized by force dozens of Palestinian towns, villages and cities and expelled more than 200,000 Palestinians from their lands.

Only through an honest inquiry about the nature and practices of Zionism and Israel can understanding be reached for a settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict.



*No One Is Illegal* debunks the leading ideas behind the often-violent right-wing backlash against immigrants by putting a human face on the immigrants who risk their lives crossing the border to work in the United States.

MIKE DAVIS AND JUSTIN AKERS CHACÓN  
**NO ONE IS ILLEGAL**  
FIGHTING RACISM AND STATE VIOLENCE ON THE BORDER

"In an environment where the Right sets the agenda and where liberal opposition sidelines itself in the debate, any discussion of immigration is corrupted by a litany of lies and deceptions. While vigilantes go unchallenged in the streets, so too do the misconceptions that they exploit to take advantage of peoples' fears and uncertainties. While opposition has been absent from liberal organizations, grassroots efforts ... will determine in which direction immigration politics will go in the next years."

From *No One is Illegal*

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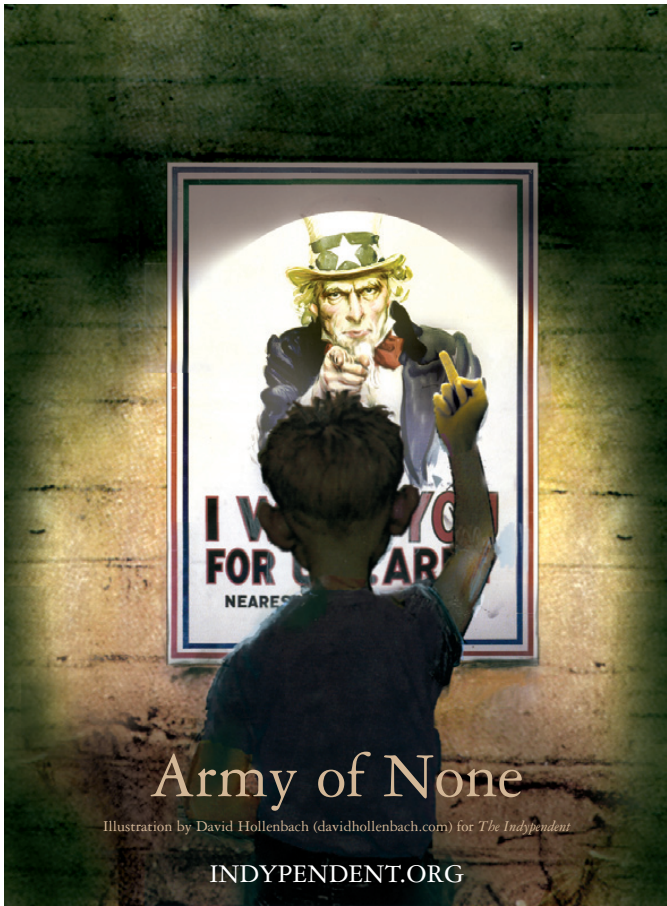
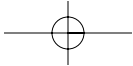
**Fri. Sept. 22 @ 7PM - Free**  
Reading: "Bitchfest: 10 Years Of Bitch Magazine" with Lisa Jarvis and Andi Zeisler. Covers everything from pre-scandal Martha Stewart to the "gayby boom".

**Mon. Sept. 25th @ 7PM - Free**  
Reading: Kelly Kerney "Born Again"  
The wild times of a young Pentecostal in Indiana.

**Wed. Sept. 27th @ 7PM - Free**  
Authors with Lewis DeSimone, E.M. Kahn, and Bill Valentine. A story of Neal and Zach, passionate lovers torn apart by mental illness. . . emotional decent after the violent death of his partner of twenty-one years.

**Fri. Sept. 29th @ 7PM - Free**  
"Jokes and the Unconscious" With Diane DiMassa and Daphne Gottlieb readings from the graphic novel by slam poet Daphne Gottlieb and "Hothead Paisan."

**Sat. Sept. 30th @ 7PM - \$5 - \$10**  
Discussion: Breaking the Silence. A short video produced by young israelis whom have decided to speak out about a crime they committed while in the service of the israeli army. Discussion to follow the screening.



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4 West 43rd St., room 311. Join us!

#### THURS SEPT 21

6pm • Free  
FORUM: "RACIAL PROFILING POST 9/11: THE EVOLUTION OF SANCTIONED PREJUDICE." W/Cynthia Deitle (FBI special agent, Civil Rights Squad), King Downing (ACLU), Anthony Gair (co-counsel of Amadou Diallo), Udi Ofer (NYCLU), Faiza Ali (CAIR-NY civil rights director), Shayana Kadidal (Center for Constitutional Rights).  
Kimmel Center, room 914  
60 Washington Sq St.

#### FRI SEPT 22

7pm • Free  
READING: "BITCHFEST." W/LISA JERVIS & ANDI ZEISLER. Highlights from *Bitch* Magazine's first 10 years.  
Bluestockings  
172 Allen St. at Stanton • 212-777-6028

#### SAT SEPT 23

2pm • \$35 for bus from NY  
FORUM: ON THE CUBAN 5  
W/attorney Leonard Weinglass, Francisco Letelier (son of Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier), Livio Di Celmo (brother of Fabio Di Celmo, killed by a terrorist bomb in Havana in 1997), Jose Pertierra (Venezuela's attorney in Luis Posada Carriles extradition request), family members of the victims of the Cubana airplane bombing in 1976, many others.  
George Washington University, in DC.  
[FreetheCubanfive@hotmail.com](mailto:FreetheCubanfive@hotmail.com)  
Bus Info: 212-633-6646

#### SUN SEPT 24

6pm • Free  
PROTEST: SEN. SCHUMER'S SUPPORT FOR WAR.  
Meet at Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn, followed by a procession through Park Slope ending at Schumer's apartment building at 7pm for speakers and to read names of dead.  
[iraq@brooklynpeace.org](mailto:iraq@brooklynpeace.org)

#### MON SEPT 25

7pm • Free  
READING: "BORN AGAIN."  
W/novelist Kelly Kerney. The trials of a young Pentacostal.  
Bluestockings  
172 Allen St at Stanton • 212-777-6028

#### TUES SEPT 26

7pm • Free  
READING:  
*CHILD SOLDIERS & CHILD SLAVES*.  
W/Jimmie Briggs (journalist covering Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Colombia and author of *Innocents Lost: When Child Soldiers Go to War*) & Patricia McCormick (award-winning journalist; researcher in Nepal & India).  
Housing Works Bookstore Cafe  
126 Crosby St. • 212-334-3324

#### WED SEPT 27

7:30pm • \$3; \$6 incl. dinner at 7pm.  
DISCUSSION: "WHAT'S THE SCOOP IN THE FEMINIST PRESS?" what feminist magazines are saying about war & occupation, the growing assault on reproductive rights, environmental abuses, indigenous women's struggles & more.  
Freedom Hall, 113 W 128th St.  
212-222-0633 • [www.radicalwomen.org](http://www.radicalwomen.org)

#### THUR SEPT 28

1:00-8:00pm • \$15  
NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT STRIKE ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE  
Panels, workshops, discussion and amazing speakers. An event not to miss. Roger Toussaint, Barbara Brown, Juan Gonzalez and Stanley Aronowitz among many others. Joseph Murphy Institute, 25 W. 43rd St. 19th Fl. • 212-827-0200

5:30-8:30pm • Free  
DISCUSSION: *WILL I GET FIRED FOR THIS?* Teaching Controversial Issues in the classroom. A NYCORE sponsored panel discussion on what educators can do to address both historic and current issues of social (in)justice.  
NYU, Pless Hall 3rd floor lounge,  
82 Washington Square East • Childcare available with RSVP • [www.nycore.org](http://www.nycore.org)

7-10pm • Free  
DISCUSSION: MILITARY RECRUITING & THE GROWING RESISTANCE W/IN THE ARMED FORCES. W/peace activist & Iraq veteran Jose Vasquez, Anthony Arrove, Peter Laufer Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg and Book signing.

Judson Memorial Church, 239 Thompson St.  
201-200-1985 • [www.citybelt.org](http://www.citybelt.org)

7pm • Free  
READING: W/STEWART FLORSHEIM & RICHARD MICHELSON, both award winning-poets. Florsheim is the editor of "Ghosts of the Holocaust," an anthology of poetry by children of Holocaust survivors, & "The Short Fall From Grace." Michelson's most recent book is "Battles and Lullabies," he is the author of several other children's books.  
Bluestockings  
172 Allen St at Stanton • 212-777-6028

#### SAT SEPT 30

12:30pm • Free  
GETTING DIRTY WITH THE GOWANUS CANAL  
Tour NYC's dirty secret on an in-depth ride around what was formally one of Brooklyn's finest tidal estuaries.  
Meet at 12:30pm on the Brooklyn side of the Williamsburg Bridge; or meet at 1pm at Grand Army Plaza. Rain Date: Sunday, Oct 1.

#### SUN OCT 1

2-9pm – Free  
EVENT: NY/NJ AREA BLACK PANTHER PARTY 40TH ANNIVERSARY.  
Location TBA.  
Contact [panthershepcat@aol.com](mailto:panthershepcat@aol.com) for location and other information.

#### TUES OCT 3

6:30-8:30pm – Free  
TALK/BOOK SIGNING: *VOICES OF RESISTANCE: MUSLIM WOMEN ON WAR, FAITH & SEXUALITY*. W/editor Sarah Hussain & authors, Aisha Sattar, Chaumtoli Huq, Maryum Saifee, Munerah Ahmed Sherien Sultan, Z Gabriel Arkles. A woman mourns the death of a cousin killed in a suicide bombing, a transsexual remembers w/fondness the donning of the veil he no longer wears as a Muslim man.  
CUNY Grad Center, 365 5th Ave, room 9204 (photo ID required).  
212-817-7570, [MEMEAC@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:MEMEAC@gc.cuny.edu)

#### THUR OCT 5

Noon • Free  
ACTION: WORLD CAN'T WAIT STRIKE, RALLY, MASS MEETING. Massive strike, w/support across country. Meet in Bryant Park, march to UN, then to Union Sq for culminating rally. Volunteer: 212-969-0772, [nyc@worldcantwait.org](mailto:nyc@worldcantwait.org)

#### SUN OCT 8

1-8pm – \$10 plus any size bag of unwanted clothing  
SWAP-O-RAMA-RAMA  
A giant clothing swap and series of do-it-yourself workshops in which a community explores reuse and creativity through the recycling of used clothing. Once inside all of the materials for creativity and all the clothes you can carry are free. All ages welcome!  
3rd Ward 195 Morgan Ave. Brooklyn  
[www.3rdwardbrooklyn.org](http://www.3rdwardbrooklyn.org)

#### THURS OCT 5

7:00 - 10:00pm • FREE  
MONTHLY VOLUNTEER MEET-AND-GREET BBQ  
Join Time's Up! volunteers at our backyard garden BBQ. Come and check out the Time's Up! space and learn how you can get involved in Time's Up! and make a difference in your community and the environment. New volunteers welcome. Bring snacks and/or grillable food to share. Vegan and meat options available. Bring your own plate and utensils to help prevent waste! Time's Up! Space at 49 E. Houston St.

#### SUN OCT 8

2:00pm • FREE  
GREEN APPLE DOWNTOWN CYCLING-ADULTS  
Explore the Garden District, greenways and riversides, composting, solar power and green buildings. Easy ride but cancelled if pouring. RSVP to [apple@green-map.org](mailto:apple@green-map.org). Related maps are at [www.GreenAppleMap.org](http://www.GreenAppleMap.org). Starts and ends at the Temperance Monument in Tompkins Square Park, near Avenue A and 9th St.

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